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Ethical Dilemmas of Human Resource Managers

by

Ingrid Maria Stammer

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

Adult and Higher Education

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 1995

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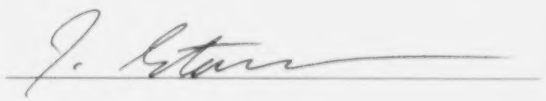

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Peter Wright

Supervisor, Dr. P. Wright

J. Fris

Dr. J. Fris

A K Deane

A. K. Deane

Dated: August 11, 1995

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
Anne and Hans Stammer, whose support has been constant and unwavering.

Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to examine the processes used by human resource managers to resolve ethical dilemmas encountered during the execution of their duties. The study also sought to identify events which present human resource managers with ethical dilemmas; ethical principles used to guide their decisions; and specific ethical problems of the sample population.

The sample population consisted of four subjects, two males and two females who were human resource managers in Edmonton. Each subject participated in an individual interview and in a focus group that brought the four subjects together. The data collected from these sessions were interpreted using grounded theory procedures and techniques.

The study found that to resolve ethical dilemmas, human resource managers engage in a ten-step decision making process that relies on their experience as human resource professionals, and is guided by personal beliefs, values and ethics, as well as a knowledge of the employer's corporate ethics, guidelines, policies and procedures.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge and express sincere gratitude and indebtedness to all who contributed towards the successful completion of this study.

With the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Peter Wright, the completion of this study became an attainable goal. His support and direction are greatly appreciated. Sincere thanks are extended to Dr. Joe Fris and Art Deane for their participation as advisory members of the committee. Early in the process, Dr. Fris provided sound advice on the attitude and approach to writing a thesis which helped to dissolve some of the barriers along the way. Art Dean has been an important part of my development as an educator, first as a professor in the undergraduate program, then as a source of direction during the graduate program. It was Art who invited me to participate in the Grant MacEwan DACUM, which led to this study.

Special thanks are extended to the men and women who participated in the study. They willingly and enthusiastically gave their time to share their expertise, thoughts and feelings.

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CHAPTER I

The Problem

Even though he could have smashed through any bank
in the United States, he had the strength, but he would not...

Superman never made any money
For saving the world from Solomon Grundy
And sometimes I despair the world will never see
Another man like him

"Superman's Song"
Brad Roberts, 1991
Performed by the "Crash Test Dummies"

Introduction

The primary concern of a business is its economic health, producing goods and services at a competitive price which will yield a profit (Selekman, 1959). This concern can lead some businesses to make decisions that ignore social values and legal restrictions. Those who have pushed beyond acceptable guidelines and have been exposed to public scrutiny include a baby-food manufacturer that sold sugar water as apple juice, an airline that tampered with maintenance reports, a company that suppressed information that proved employees were dying from asbestos inhalation, and an independent broker who pleaded guilty to 2,000 counts of mail and wire fraud (Kirrane, 1990, Gellerman, 1986). Poor ethical choices are not limited to these few specific examples, nor are they restricted to corporations in general. "American workers will "steal" nearly $200 billion from their employers this year by arriving late, leaving early and misusing time on the job" (Silas, 1990, p. 3).

As stories about unethical behaviour have been brought to the public's attention, organizations have felt the pressure to develop ethics programs. By offering instruction in ethics, it is expected that employees will be able to address complex ethical issues and make decisions which will not jeopardize profits or public relations. Factors being addressed by these programs include technological changes, changes in law, downsizing of organizations, environmental concerns, increased diversity of the workforce, participation in global markets, product safety and employee rights (Lankard, 1991, Kirrane, 1990).

Instruction in ethics developed into a growth industry in the early 1990s. Findings in the United States in 1990 indicated "that 36.9 percent of organizations with more than 100 employees provided some type of ethics training, compared with 26.6 percent in 1989 and

19.7 percent in 1988" (Thompson, 1990, p. 84). Between 1991 and 1994 the percentage of organizations providing ethics training fluctuated, from 37 percent in 1991 (Lee, 1991, p. 55) and 43 percent in 1992 (Filipczak, 1992, p. 54), to 41 percent in 1993 (Froiland, 1993, p. 63), and dropping to 39 percent in 1994 (Training, 1994, p. 64). Another indicator that the demand for ethics instruction was increasing could be seen in the greater number of suppliers offering products or related services. In Training magazine's 1984-85 Marketplace Directory there were only five suppliers, in the 1989-90 edition the number had grown to 74 suppliers (Thompson, 1990). Whether the general increase in concern and instruction has had a significant effect on corporate culture is open to debate.

Very few empirical data are available to illustrate the impact of ethics instruction. Most evidence is anecdotal. Developing an effective instrument to measure the topic has proven difficult. In general, data collection has been limited to attitude surveys. The results of these surveys show few people believe that an ethics course will make any difference (Thompson, 1990).

Proponents believe that ethics instruction can result in a positive and proactive environment where you will find "improved employee morale, a less stressful culture and lower recruitment costs" (Thompson, 1990, p. 85). Other benefits can include improved safety practices and better labour relations. It is considered a difficult subject to teach, and it may be that ethics instruction can only sensitize people to the potential consequences of their behaviours, thereby providing them with a framework from which to make decisions.

There is a great deal written about ethics in the fields of medicine, law, counselling, teaching, and business. An area that is lacking material specific to its ethical concerns is human resource management. The irony is that many institutions have their human resources department establish and maintain systematic ethics programs (Rothwell & Sredl, 1992, Kirrane, 1990). This places human resource management practitioners in a position where they must deliver and maintain a program, as well as provide an exemplary role model, without having had preparation for the task.

There are many ethical issues concerning human resource management that could be addressed, such as: the processes and elements involved in making ethical decisions, how behaviours affect outcomes related to ethics, the balance between ethical judgment and occupational guidelines, how interaction with staff and management affects ethical outcomes, or whether ethics instruction or programs improve those skills associated with effective ethical decisions. Any one of these topics could provide data useful for the delivery of ethics instruction to human resource management practitioners. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be limited to the examination of the processes used by human resource management practitioners to resolve ethical dilemmas.

Statement of the Objective

This exploratory study will examine the processes used by human resource

management practitioners to resolve ethical dilemmas encountered during the execution of their duties.

Research Objectives of the Study

The following objectives will be addressed:

1. Through discussions with human resource management practitioners, as individuals and in a focus group, have human resource management practitioners identify events which present practitioners with ethical dilemmas.

2. Through discussions with human resource management practitioners, as individuals and in a focus group, identify the ethical principles human resource management practitioners use to guide their decisions.

3. Through discussions with individual human resource management practitioners, identify a process for making ethical decisions.

Assumptions

It is assumed that:

1. Subjects may have obligations and loyalties towards the organization for which they are working and to the human resource management field which may affect the accuracy and bias of their responses.

2. People selected to participate in this study will provide truthful responses that will reflect their opinions.

3. The results of the DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) process will be accurate.

4. The results of the focus group will be accurate.

Limitations

The study will have the following limitations:

1. The results of the study will be limited to those four people comprising the research population, who were selected from human resource management professionals nominated by executive members of the Human Resources Management Association of Edmonton (HRMAE) and the Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA).

2. The DACUM verification results will be limited by the accuracy of the questionnaire responses given by participants of the study.

3. The focus group results will be limited by the responses given by the participants which may be affected by obligations and loyalties to external organizations.

Definition of Terms

Attitude - a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner (Brown, 1976, p. 16).

Belief - an inference made by an observer about underlying states of expectancy (Brown, p. 16).

Dilemma - when two apparent goods come into conflict (Fein, 1988, p. 45).

Ethics - the study of right and wrong, usually including the determining and encouraging of what is right (Brown, 1976, p. 16).

Ideology - an organization of beliefs and attitudes- religious, political, or philosophical in nature - that is more or less institutionalized or shared with others, deriving from external authority (p. 16).

Opinion - a verbal expression of some belief, attitude, or value, insufficient to produce certainty (p. 16).

Process - the linking of sequences of action/interaction as they pertain to the management of, control over, or response to, a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 143).

Value - a belief upon which a person acts by preference; an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence (Brown, 1976, p. 16).

Human Resources (HR) field - The Human Resources field is broad and includes a number of areas of knowledge and skill:

Management Practices
Employment, Placement and HR Planning
Compensation and Benefits
Training and Development
Organization Development/Effectiveness
Employee and Labour Relations
Health, Safety and Security
Research and Teaching
(Human Resources Institute of Alberta, 1991)

Human Resource Professional - Certification requirements for the Human Resources Institute of Alberta are as follows:

1. Twelve years of related professional experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Human Resources Management Practices
- Employment Selection, Orientation and Placement
- Training/Management Development
- Organizational Development
- Employee Relations
- Labour Relations
- Compensation and Benefits
- Industrial Health and Safety
- Research in Human Resources
- Human Resources Information Systems

OR

2. Nine years of professional experience in one or more of the above areas, with a completed accredited Continuing Education Certificate in Personnel or Human Resources or Business Administration or a Behavioural Science.

OR

3. Six years of professional experience in one or more of the above areas with a completed two year Diploma from a recognized community college.

OR

4. Four years of professional experience in one or more of the above areas, with a completed Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university program.

OR

5. Two years of professional experience in one or more of the above areas with a graduate degree from an accredited university program (Human Resources Institute of Alberta, 1990).

Need for the Study

There is a perceived need for ethics instruction, as demonstrated by the increased number of organizations providing some form of ethics training to employees and the growth of suppliers offering related products and services (Thompson, 1990). If the programs are in place only for public relations and "damage control efforts" (Thompson, 1990, p. 84) then there is the possibility that they are nothing more than a fad which will eventually disappear. If there are any lasting and positive results which support the ongoing delivery and promotion of ethics education, such as a better corporate culture, then it is necessary to do research which will support continued or improved instruction in the area.

The area of human resource management appears to be a neglected area of instruction. The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) "maintains standards, policies and procedures that profoundly affect the teaching and research activities of almost all business educational institutions" (Myers, 1990, p. 72). Human resource management is absent from the AACSB's common body of knowledge. As a result, AACSB accredited business schools require only 12 percent of undergraduates and graduates to take a human resource management course. Corporate respondents to an AACSB research report "felt that approximately equal amount of time should be spent in educating business students in the subjects of marketing, human behaviour and organization theory, and human resource management" (p. 74).

In Alberta, there is a strong human resource management community represented by such organizations as HRIA, which has developed a code of ethics for human resource professionals, and HRMAE. These organizations are working independently, as well as with each other and cooperating educational institutions to develop much needed professional development courses. As Theron W. Kasawski, President of HRMAE, wrote, "There is a

definite lack of education available locally for human resource practitioners and aspiring practitioners" (personal communication, October 21, 1991).

Grant MacEwan Community College (GMCC), acting on its 1989 needs assessment of the Edmonton human resource management community, joined with HRMAE and HRIA to conduct further research. Using the DACUM process, the intent of the research was to generate an inventory of competencies for human resource professionals which would be used to develop human resource management credit courses. These courses would address the training needs of all levels.

During the DACUM process, the need to "practice ethical behaviour" was identified as a management competency. The declaration was so vague that it appeared to be nothing more than a motherhood statement which begged further definition and exploration if it was to be effective.

Not only will GMCC benefit from the study but other educational institutions, educators, and curriculum developers who wish to offer human resource or ethics courses will also benefit. The study will provide an understanding of the educational needs and offer a basis for curriculum development in human resource courses or ethics training.

Significance of the Problem

This study has both practical and theoretical significance. The results of the study should be of interest to institutions offering human resource management courses, instructors delivering human resource management courses, people working as human resource practitioners, individuals concerned with human resource management issues, and those who have responsibility to provide direction and leadership to human resource management programs.

In terms of practical value, this study may have significance in providing insights for human resource practitioners, and for policy makers committed to institutional human resource management program implementation. In addition, the study will help practitioners requiring immediate assistance in teaching ethical decision-making in the classroom setting, and will provide a general base for future course delivery.

In summary, the results of the study may have significance in providing human resource management instructors with information which can be incorporated into courses taught for the increased success of individuals in the human resource management field.

Organization of the Thesis

The first chapter of this study will include a statement of the problem, the supporting objectives of the study, assumptions affecting the study, limitations of the study, operational definitions which will be applied to the study, the need for the study and the significance of the stated problem.

The second chapter will include a review of the literature related to the research

problem and the findings of related research studies that have a direct or indirect relationship to the current inquiry. This review will demonstrate that current information about human resource management ethics is inadequate.

The third chapter will describe the methodology used to collect data from the research sample and for data analysis. This chapter will also include a description of the population of the study, how the research sample was selected from the population, and a description of any research instruments used to collect data.

The fourth chapter will report the findings obtained by the study.

The fifth and final chapter will present the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research, as well as reflections on the research process.

CHAPTER II

Related Literature and Research

> The "minor" virtues are the only ones that matter. Politeness is more reliable than the moist virtues of compassion, charity, and sincerity; just as fair play is more important than the abstraction of justice. The major virtues tend to disintegrate under the pressures of convenient rationalization. But good form is good form, and it stands immutable in the storm of circumstance.
>
> "Shibumi"
> Trevanian, 1979

Introduction

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will present a review of related literature from books, periodicals and journals. It is not an exhaustive review but provides background information for this study. The second section of this chapter will present a review of research that has been conducted and reported, which has implications for the current investigation.

Related Literature

The researcher accessed the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database to identify related literature and studies done on the topics of human resource management ethics and business ethics. The descriptions used were: ethics, human resource management, and business ethics. Ethics yielded a total of 3,366 citations (hits), human resource management yielded 86 hits, and business ethics yielded 34 hits. When the terms ethics and human resource management were combined they yielded only one hit. This hit, by James F. Newman, along with three other studies will be reviewed. Additional articles, books and papers from the ERIC search or from citations within the literature were reviewed for their implications for this study.

Kant

Ethics define what is correct and acceptable behaviour. They also remind us that we have a social obligation to tell the truth. As Immanuel Kant explained, "without truth social intercourse and conversation become valueless" (1988, p. 63). Any untruth or lie is offensive.

> Whatever militates against frankness lowers the dignity of man. Insidious, underhand conduct uses means which strikes at the root of society because they make frankness impossible; it is far viler than violence; for against violence we can defend ourselves... but the mean rogue, who has not the courage to come out into the open with his

roguery, is devoid of every vestige of nobility of character. (p. 68)

Without truth it is difficult, if not impossible to make sound decisions. Untruths prevent us from increasing our knowledge. We learn "by experience or by what others tell" us (p. 65). Even in this study it is expected that participants will tell the truth so that the data will have value.

As individuals, we are reserved in order to conceal our faults and shortcomings. A person will pretend "in order to make others attribute to him merits and virtues which he has not" (p. 63). Organizations and businesses present themselves in a similar manner, endeavouring to appear good. If the public believes that an organization or business is good, then a trust develops. If there is a scandal, such as the marketing of an unsafe birth control device (Gellerman, 1986 p. 85), it is a shock to "our moral sensibilities" (Silas, 1990, p. 3).

Kant goes on to describe the various shades of untruth in which people and organizations become entangled when attempting to achieve goals that cannot be attained by telling the truth. If someone indicates that he or she is going to speak his or her mind, and instead of doing so makes a false declaration, it is an untruth, "a falsiloquium" (Kant, 1988, p. 65).

> A falsiloquium can be a mendacium - a lie - especially when it contravenes the right of an individual. Although I do a man no injustice by lying to him when he has lied to me, yet I act against the right of mankind, since I set myself in opposition to the condition and means through which any human society is possible. (p. 65)

If a true promise is not kept it is a breach of faith, whereas a lying promise is cheating. There are times when a person believes that he cannot tell the truth but does not want to lie or cheat. If the person must provide an answer, he or she is forced to resort to equivocation, or ambiguous meanings.

The only case in which Kant believes white lies seem to be justified is when a statement is forced from a person under conditions that convince him that improper use would be made of the information. These white lies may be used to protect an individual's material goods, as when a mugger asks where his money is, or an organization from a hostile takeover, when asked to reveal the current status of the company.

Business and ethics

Regardless of the circumstance a lie is still a lie, "every lie is objectionable and contemptible" (Kant, 1988, p. 66), and in some cases can lead to dreadful consequences, as with the company that for decades suppressed evidence proving its employees were dying of asbestos inhalation (Gellerman, 1986, p. 85). The perpetration of an untruth or unethical behaviour appears to be, if not encouraged, accepted in business. It is estimated that of 500 of the largest American corporations, approximately two-thirds have been involved in some

illegal behaviour (p. 85). This questionable conduct is justified by those who say the primary responsibility of business is profit, growth, and providing shareholders with a return on their investment (Kirrane, 1990, Selekman, 1959). To some this means winning at all costs regardless of long-term problems, such as "pollution, depletion of resources and a workforce under stress" (Kirrane, 1990, p. 54).

Unethical behaviour is usually justified by one, or a combination of four rationalizations: "that the activity is not "really" illegal or immoral; that it is in the individual's or the corporation's best interest; that it will never be found out; or that because it helps the company the company will condone it" (Gellerman, 1986, p. 85). Kirrane (1990) identified factors that encourage the use of these rationalizations or aggravate ethical issues and dilemmas. Some of the factors include:

> changes in law and technology
> global, multicultural markets
> increased diversity in the ...workforce
> employees' broader definition of rights
> the trend toward decision making
> the need to blend corporate cultures during joint ventures or after mergers and acquisitions
> intensified media scrutiny that may lead to bad public relations or legal exposure (p. 54).

If employees are expected to adjust quickly to changes and to do more with less, they may feel that they are in an ambiguous situation. They may decide that if something is not specifically wrong, then it must be right, and as a result "engage in expedient but questionable behaviour" (p. 55) especially if they are rewarded for the behaviour. They may believe that they are being "sharp - and not shady" (Gellerman, 1986, p. 88).

To bring about change from an ethically suspect organization to one with an ethical environment, it is necessary to have reliable guidelines about what will be tolerated and what will be condemned. There needs to be a system in place that will manage ethics. This will give employees the tools needed to determine the difference between taking an economic risk and an illegal act that may make more money. Employers and employees "must be concerned with more than just results. They have to look very hard at how results are obtained" (p. 89).

In an organization, ethics need to be a core priority that is clarified, articulated and supported by the executives and managers. "Employees at all levels observe their superiors for clues regarding what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour" (Weiss, 1991, p. 71). All credos, codes of ethics, mission statements or corporate philosophies should be more than just slogans. They must define ethical principles not company rules.

To be effective, there needs to be support for an ethics program throughout an organization, in its structures, processes and actions. This can be done by having employees

participate in workshops, surveys, focus groups and ethics committees that have representation from management and employees (Weiss, 1991, Kirrane, 1990). "Ethical companies create a climate of inquiry in which discussion and exploration of options are encouraged" (Kirrane, 1990, p. 56).

Ethics training can give employees tools and techniques that will help translate a company's ethical principles to an operational level. It can "sensitize people to think through the behaviour and the consequences" (Thompson, 1990, p. 87). Possible benefits realized from ethics training can include improved employee morale, a less stressful environment, lower recruitment costs, better decisions, and a more committed workforce (Thompson, 1990, Kirrane, 1990). Empirical data supporting these claims is scarce because the topic is difficult to measure. As a result, it is important to "resist the tendency to define ethics as a means to various ends. . . . that would mean that if the ends aren't achieved, ethical behaviour may be dispensed with as a means" (Kirrane, 1990, p. 54).

Human resource management and ethics

Human resources departments are deeply affected by ethics programs and ethics training since "many businesses make the human resources department serve as headquarters for the establishment and maintenance of systematic ethics programs" (Kirrane, 1990, p. 53). Generally, human resource professionals are willing to accept ethics training and development as new career responsibilities, but it is with apprehension. Some of the impediments to carrying out these responsibilities include not having organizational clout, a lack of participation in strategic planning, being limited by traditional human resource functions, and a lack of training in ethics (Petrick, 1992).

Human resource professionals are familiar with ethical issues in most of their primary functions. Patricia McLagan (1989) surveyed nearly 800 human resource professionals to identify the most pervasive ethical issues in the field. The following, based on McLagan's results, is a list of ethical issues in order of the most pervasive to the least.

maintaining confidentiality
saying "no" to those requests that seem to be inappropriate
showing respect for copyrights, sources and intellectual property
ensuring truth in claims, data and recommendations
balancing organizational and individual needs and interests
ensuring customer and user involvement, participation, and ownership
avoiding conflicts of interest
managing personal biases
showing respect for, interest in and representation of individual and population differences
making the intervention appropriate to the customer's or user's needs
being sensitive to the direct and indirect effects of intervention and acting to address

negative consequences
pricing or costing products and services fairly
using power appropriately (p. 55).

Gellerman, Frankel and Landenson

In their book *Values and ethics in organization and human systems development*, Gellerman, Frankel and Landenson propose a five step model for ethical thought and action (1990, p. 65). The model (Figure 1) is an adaptation of the author Frankel's ideas around ethical decision making. The intent is to provide a systematic way of thinking about complicated situations where there is a lack of clarity around which values and ethics are relevant, and how those ethics apply to the specific problem. The model can "encourage ethical sensitivity, thought, and action in real situations" (1990, p. 64).

Stream of consciousness is the ground in which the process for making ethical decisions takes place. It is a conscious process that permits the use of intuition as a means of drawing on unconscious knowledge. Ethical sensitivity triggers the process by enabling an individual to recognize ethical problems. "At this first point in the process, it is important to recognize that clarity about your values, ethics, and potential ethical problems is a primary determinant of your sensitivity and its ability to alert you to the need for further thought" (1990, p. 75).

At this point, it is necessary to determine if further analysis is needed. If not, then move to step 3, the decision. If there is a need for more information, then move to step 1, problem analysis. Here the choice is between ethics violation or a conflict in values. Ethics violation, step 1a, asks what was violated, if it was moral rules, moral ideals, ethical principles or ethical guidelines. It is necessary to decide if it is a clear or unclear violation and if the violation is ethically justifiable. Once the decision has been made the process moves to step 2a. A clear and justifiable violation will be easier to analyze ethically, whereas an unclear violation indicates a need to proceed with greater care. Conflict in values, step 1b, asks if one's values will be compromised by the consequences of the action that may be taken, which values are affected by the action and consequences, and what priority each of these values has. If there is no conflict, then the process moves to step 3, decision, or to step 2a.

In step 2, ethical analysis, there is a series of sub-steps that will gather more information to clarify the situation. Step 2a, analyze situation, asks that the imagination be used to determine a clear vision of the desired results, suggesting that it is better to know what is desired at this time than limiting the possibilities with facts and assumptions. Once the vision has been clarified, then it is time to identify facts and assumptions, gathering comprehensive and detailed information that is ethically relevant to the situation. Facts refer to observations made about the past and present, while assumptions plan future action. With a clear vision of the results, and supporting facts and assumptions, the next step will be 2b,

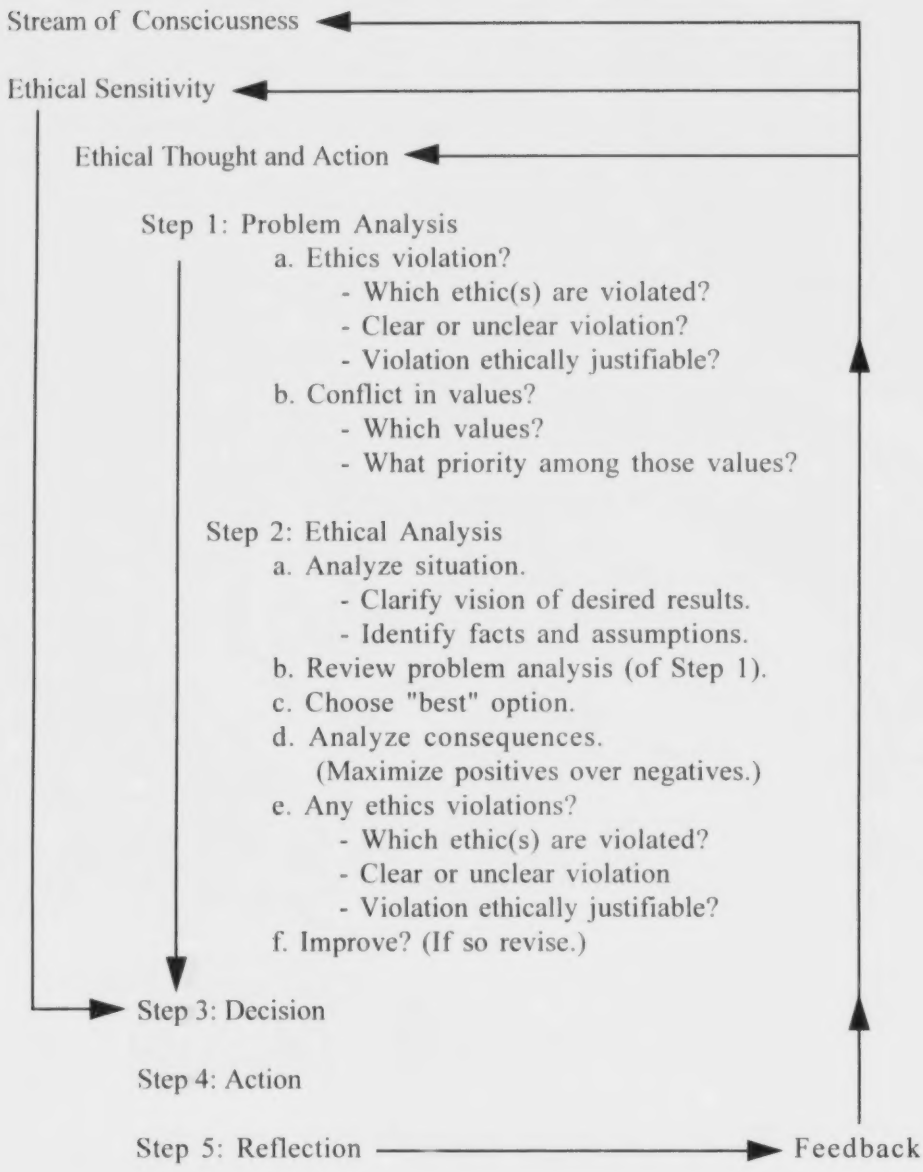
Stream of Conscicusness
Ethical Sensitivity
Ethical Thought and Action
Step 1: Problem Analysis
a. Ethics violation?
- Which ethic(s) are violated?
- Clear or unclear violation?
- Violation ethically justifiable?
b. Conflict in values?
- Which values?
- What priority among those values?
Step 2: Ethical Analysis
a. Analyze situation.
- Clarify vision of desired results.
- Identify facts and assumptions.
b. Review problem analysis (of Step 1).
c. Choose "best" option.
d. Analyze consequences.
(Maximize positives over negatives.)
e. Any ethics violations?
- Which ethic(s) are violated?
- Clear or unclear violation
- Violation ethically justifiable?
f. Improve? (If so revise.)
Step 3: Decision
Step 4: Action
Step 5: Reflection
Feedback

Figure 1. A five-step model for ethical thought and action.

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a review of the problem analysis. With the information gathered in step 1 and step 2a the problem may have been clarified and there will be greater confidence in identifying ethics violations and conflicting values.

By step 2c there is enough information to choose the "best" option. All options should be evaluated to determine the "potential for maximizing good over bad consequences and doing so in ways compatible with your ethics" (1990, p. 82). This leads to step 2d, the analysis of consequences, where one ascertains the likely benefits, possible costs, and how benefits and costs balance to produce the greatest good for the parties involved. Step 2e will determine whether the option chosen will pose any ethics violations. If there is any possibility that ethics will be violated, then it is important to ask which morals, principles, or guidelines could be affected, if the violation is clear, and if the violation is justifiable.

Step 2f asks if it is possible to improve on the option and if it is, the option should be revised and taken through steps 2a to 2e to repeat analysis. This loop can be repeated until a suitable option is reached. One final test before implementing the option is to consult with a colleague who can offer a different perspective on the situation.

The final three steps are step 3, decision; step 4, action; and step 5, reflection. The decision will be determined by the option that seems the best, based on a combination of intuition and reason. Then it will be necessary to determine whether action will be taken or not taken. Reflection on the process will "clarify your vision and beliefs; refine your values and ethics; and give feedback to your consciousness as a means of heightening your ethical sensitivity and developing your ability to act ethically in the future" (1990, p. 87).

The model does not appear to address the complexity and depth involved in ethical decision making, nor does the model satisfy or identify all aspects of ethical decision making. It does not address the ambiguous, complex, or delicate situations in which people making ethical decisions often find themselves. The model could be seen as providing limited guidance and a way to justify violation of basic moral rules.

What the model can do is facilitate a solution to ethical problems for those whose ethics are clear and comprehensive, and heighten sensitivity to situations where ethics may be violated. For those whose ethics are developing, the model focuses on the individual's ethics, questioning their validity and creating a situation that encourages examination of ethics. Using the model may encourage some individuals on to continued moral development.

Kohlberg

Lawrence Kohlberg has studied the stages of moral development, created a test to assess stages of moral judgement, and used these stages as a basis of a moral education program. For Kohlberg moral education is not a bag of virtues and vices. "Virtues and vices are labels by which people award praise or blame to others, but the ways people use praise and blame towards others are not the ways in which they think when making moral

decisions themselves" (1970, p. 63). Kohlberg believes that justice is the only virtue. It is not a character trait, "not a rule or set of rules, it is a moral principle... a mode of choosing which is universal, a rule of choosing which we want all people to adapt in all situations... There are exceptions to rules, then, but no exception to principles. A moral obligation is an obligation to respect the right or claim of another person" (p. 69-70). Justice is the knowledge of good, and can be taught.

Kohlberg conducted interviews about right and wrong in various cultures throughout the world. In all the cultures he found "the same forms of moral thinking" (p. 70). He identified six forms of thinking which constituted "(1) an invariant sequence of (2) hierarchical transformations which are (3) structured wholes" (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 3). The six forms are defined in terms of cognitive structures, or thought and judgement structures as shown in Table 1.

There is an indication that in childhood, moral development has some relation to maturational stages, while adult progress results from the effects of experience on development. "The bulk of moral stage-development occurs in childhood and adolescence and does not require the extensive personal experience of moral choice and responsibility found in adult life" (Kohlberg, 1973, p. 32).

In childhood and adolescence, it is possible to induce upward movement in moral judgement in the majority of pre-adolescents and adolescents who have the ability to reason at the next stage. The first step in leading a student to a higher level of moral judgement is to create dissatisfaction with the present knowledge of good. This is done "by exposing the student to moral conflict situations for which his principles have no ready solution. Second, we expose him to disagreement and argument about these situations with his peers. ...if we inspire cognitive conflict in the student and point the way to the next step up the divided line, he will tend to see things previously invisible to him" (Kohlberg, 1970, p. 82).

Adults are capable of principled thinking, where they postulate principles to which the self and the society "ought to be committed" (Kohlberg, 1973, p. 36). Development at this level requires a different kind of experience than that of childhood and adolescence. "Personal experiences of choice involving questioning and commitment, in some sort of integration with stimulation to cognitive-moral reflection, seems required for movement from conventional to principled thought" (Kohlberg 1973, p. 41).

To encourage adults towards principled thought, it is necessary to engage them in experiences that involve thinking. A moral discussion program that incorporates role-playing activities and which has a strong emotional component will create an atmosphere that allows personal interchange and challenge to occur, providing the essential precondition for thinking and rethinking that leads to moral reflection. This vicarious symbolic experience, which may not be as effective as a concrete moral choice whose consequences must be endured long after the experience, does provide an opportunity to promote stage-development in the classroom.

Table 1

Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Development

Levels of Basic Moral Judgement	Stages of Development
I. Moral value resides in external, quasi-physical happenings, in bad acts, or in quasi-physical needs rather than in persons and standards	Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation. Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble avoiding set. Objective responsibility
	Stage 2: Naively egocentric orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor's needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity
II. Moral value resides in performing good or right roles, in maintaining the conventional order and the expectations of others.	Stage 3: Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behaviour, and judgement by intentions
	Stage 4: Authority and social-order maintaining orientation. Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others
III. Moral value resides in conformity by the self to shared or shareable standards, rights and duties	Stage 5: Contractual legalistic orientation. Recognition of an arbitrary element or starting point in rules or expectations for the sake of agreement. Duty defined in terms of contract, general avoidance of violation of the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare
	Stage 6: Conscience or principle orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience as a directing agent and to mutual respect and trust

(Kohlberg 1970, pp 71-72)

Related Research

Newman

In November 1987, James F. Newman conducted a study which assessed the needs and attitudes of 37 business executives on Long Island to determine the implications for Dowling College's Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The study intended "to discover hidden needs that could be satisfied by Dowling College's MBA program so as to enhance the program's quality and effectiveness" (p. 11). The faculty believed that the MBA program "had not been adequately maintained and/or improved over the years. The program had never been evaluated to determine its effectiveness on the population it serves" (p. 3).

As a result of the study, it was recommended that specializations in accounting, computer information systems, finance, and marketing should be developed. Courses in Business Communications, Ethics, Human Resource Management, Labour Relations, Decision Making/Problem Solving/Critical Thinking, Finance and Computer Information Systems should be developed. Existing courses which were targeted for elimination were: Small Business Management, Manufacturing, Business Law, Government & Business and Operations Research.

Other recommendations were intended to prepare students "to meet the challenges of the future" (p. 2). To develop important communications and analytical skills it was suggested that a "greater use of case studies, projects and/or papers" (p. 37) be implemented in courses. A stronger connection to the business community and its expertise should be encouraged by inviting business executives to be guest lecturers or adjunct professors, and by expanding the internship program into the business community. Further connections to the community could be made if executives were able to enrol employees in the program. As a result, the feasibility of offering courses at firm locations off-campus was to be examined. It was also recommended that a further study of the program should be performed in the future.

Implementation of these suggestions was seen as essential to the survival of the program and the college. If the quality and reputation of the MBA program were not maintained and public support was withdrawn, the loss of revenue to the college would be fatal.

The other implications of this study suggested that ethics and human resource management are seen as vital components of a good business program. The respondents made comments and recommendations. Among these was the observation that it was important to have a solid background in human resources. "The most effective manager is the person who knows how to work cooperatively with people and to motivate staff members to perform their responsibilities for the mutual benefit of the employee, the department, and the organization" (p. 30).

Fein

Richard Fein completed two studies on ethical conduct. The first survey dealt with ethical dilemmas of college placement and recruitment professionals. It probed "the penalty they would be willing to risk pursuant to an ethical belief" (Fein, 1989, p. 34). The second survey, a follow-up to the first, "sought to clarify the extent of behaviour that might be considered unethical" (1992, p. 62).

For the first study, two separate questionnaires were designed to ask respondents "what they believed was the proper thing to do in different situations involving ethics, described in brief scenarios" (1988, p. 45). Respondents could either choose from pre-stated answers or provide their own. One questionnaire was sent to 300 college placement professionals and the second questionnaire was sent to 300 corporate college relations professionals. Participants were chosen randomly from the membership of the College Placement Council. "There were 150 responses from the placement professionals and 87 from the college relations professionals" (1988, p. 45).

College placement professionals were asked about college placement dilemmas concerning conflict between students, institutional interests, confidentiality, strength of convictions, and dishonourable conduct.

Corporate college relations professionals were asked about college recruiting dilemmas concerning helping a self-destructive student, favouritism, strength of convictions, and giving an honest answer.

The responses of the college placement professionals indicated that the majority would remain neutral in a conflict between two students. Generally, with institutional interests, they would not allow an organization to intrude on the counselling relationship with a student, because nothing should compromise students' interests in any way. Respondents were evenly split when their ethics conflicted with the opportunity to help a student. Concern centred on who would have to pay for their ethical convictions. Most, 88 percent would be willing to risk their job to maintain strongly held moral convictions. If a student was behaving dishonourably they would try to prevent the conduct without violating the student's rights. "There is little sympathy for the student who acts dishonourably, but there is a wide variety of opinions about how directly or forcefully to act" (1988, p. 49).

The corporate recruiters had the following responses. Almost all recruiters would try to help a self-destructive student, and most would help in such a way that they would not violate the student's wishes. Most of the recruiters could not be directed to show favouritism because it violated their sense of integrity. When there was a penalty for standing moral ground, the corporate recruiters were less willing to risk their jobs than the college staff. This raised the question of whether it was more ethical to save your job and protect your family's security, or protect ethical integrity. An honest answer was also determined by the amount of risk involved. The majority were willing to lose a promotion but were not willing to lose their job.

The correct decision is not always clear. Most of the respondents in the study wanted to do what was right and were willing to endure some penalty for "acting according to their convictions" (1989, p. 38). Both groups tried to change the constraints or conditions of the scenarios to remove the dilemma from the situation. When searching for a solution to ethical dilemmas, Fein cautions,

> there is always some tension between the ethical component of the dilemma per se and considering the potential outcomes of our decision. Sharp disagreements among ethical people about what is "right" may result from differing emphases which might be placed on those components. . . . the environment of the dilemma is an important reality. . . . it means that decisions about ethical conduct are made even more complicated by the imprecise and unpredictable nature of life. (1989, p. 38)

For the second study, a questionnaire similar to the first two was designed. It used scenarios with the option for respondents to choose from pre-stated answers, or to write their own answers. The questionnaire was sent to the 550 Eastern College Personnel Officers (ECPO). There were 130 responses. Participants were asked to respond to situations involving an organization extending a job offer with an unreasonably short decision period, students reneging on job offers for various reasons, an employer rescinding an employment offer, and variations on controversial recruiters.

The results indicated that the profession was concerned about ethics, but there was an uncertainty about how ethical standards should be applied. It was suggested that the profession needs to come to an agreement on its ethics; "there must be a commonly agreed upon, binding set of rules to follow or we will be a collection of individuals working in a Hobbesian nightmare instead of principled individuals expending our efforts in an honourable profession" (1992, p. 66).

Other results suggested "that actual cases of ethical misconduct represent an exception rather than a general pattern" (1992, p. 63). Further research is required to determine if unethical behaviour is the exception or if there is a nationwide pattern of unethical behaviour.

Petrick

There are indications that of the 80 percent of American corporations that are implementing ethics initiatives 44 percent are offering ethics training. With the increase in organizational ethics development, there has been a growth in the responsibilities of human resource professionals. Prompted by these trends, Joseph A. Petrick undertook to investigate "(a) whether a regional human resource professional group would confirm selected national ethics trends and (b) whether professionals heavily involved in human resource ethics initiatives would perceive the ethical climate of their organization more favourably than

would those less involved" (Petrick, 1992, p. 330).

Based on his literature survey, Petrick generated three hypotheses: 1) that there was a positive correlation between the size of an organization and the institutionalization of its ethics; 2) a majority of organizations are operating at a conventional level of moral reasoning, conforming to "existing organizational procedures, seeking recognition from others, and maintaining the existing social system" (1992, p. 73); and 3) human resource professionals who participate in ethics-related programs will perceive a higher level of organizational moral development. He designed a 93-item questionnaire which consisted of demographic information, an Organizational Moral Development Profile (OMDP), and a list of 27 ethics related programs which may be offered by human resource professionals. The instrument was sent to 300 personnel managers and 80 members of the Western Ohio Chapter of the American Society Of Training and Development, who represented a different organization.

The response to the 380 questionnaires was 21 percent, or 80 fully completed and returned questionnaires. The limited response rate suggested that "the results should be regarded as tentative findings, promising but requiring additional investigation" (p. 333). The findings confirmed the three hypotheses.

There were several implications arising from the study for human resource professionals. It is more likely that larger organizations will offer a full range of ethics programs, as a result it was suggested that large organizations without an ethics program were "underusing a cultural resource that could lead to enhanced synergies" (p. 333). Human resource professionals in smaller organizations could affect their organizational climate by carefully implementing ethics programs. Since human resource professionals involved in ethics programs perceive an organization to have a higher level of moral development, they could promote and improve employees' perceptions of the moral climate of the organization.

Human resource professionals who use the OMDP could "identify a substandard organizational ethical climate that might explain, or could trigger, substandard performance. For example, OMDP results indicating the first or second moral level of development might explain the lack of cooperative risktaking, fruitful collaboration, and preponderance of defensive postures within the organization or department" (p. 334).

There is a cautionary note. "Inadequate programs, inappropriately delivered, may well adversely affect organizational ethics development. . . . For this reason, competent state-of-the-art ethics training is becoming an essential ingredient in equipping human resource professionals for their future responsibilities in ethics development" (p. 334).

Postscript

All of the related studies cited relied on surveys which assessed the incidence or frequency of choices. Surveys are expedient and allow a broad sampling of the target

population but cannot begin to address the complexity of issues in ethical and unethical behaviour. It is a limiting approach, which lacks depth and breadth of information. Surveys do not allow for, or thoroughly explain the full range of factors found in a natural setting that may influence, or be influenced by an individual's ethical behaviour. Surveys ask subjects to respond to hypothetical situations. "In such studies, there is some inherent risk that what the respondents say they would do and what they would actually do in a given situation may be quite different" (Fuqua & Newman, 1989, p. 89). In actual situations individuals maybe maintaining their reserve, as Kant said, to protect their faults and shortcomings.

Fuqua and Newman believe that there needs to be a significant change in the approach that researchers take when studying "why professionals behave as they do in various situations or how they arrive at their decisions to respond to situations in particular ways" (p. 85). There needs to be an emphasis on the variables that affect ethical decisions and behaviour. Because of the nature of ethics, responses are likely to be very personalized, behaviour being influenced by personal, professional and interpersonal factors that interact with contextual factors.

> If the factors that mediate ethical decision-making processes can be identified and explicated, understanding of both ethical and unethical behaviour would be greatly enhanced. In addition, such an accomplishment would yield extremely practical training and intervention strategies as well. (p. 87)

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Blue Fairy: Prove yourself brave, truthful, and unselfish and some day you will be a real boy.
Pinocchio: A real boy!
Jiminy Cricket: That won't be easy.
Blue Fairy: You must learn to choose between right and wrong.
Pinocchio: Right and wrong. But how will I know?
Jiminy Cricket: How will he know?
Blue Fairy: Your conscience will tell you.
Pinocchio: What are conscience?
Jiminy Cricket: What are conscience? I'll tell you. A conscience is that still, small voice that people won't listen to. That's just the trouble with the world today....
Blue Fairy: Now remember Pinocchio, be a good boy, and always let your conscience be your guide.

"Pinocchio"
Walt Disney, 1940

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section describes the background of this study focusing on the DACUM (Designing A Curriculum) process, how Grant MacEwan Community College (GMCC) used this process to determine the scope of human resource practitioners' competencies, and the data validation of the one competency dealing with ethics. The second section describes the procedures which were used to collect the data to further define human resource management ethics. The third section addresses the ethical principles which were applied to the study. The fourth section describes the grounded theory procedures and techniques which were used to analyze the data.

Background

This study grew out of the GMCC study of human resource management practitioner's competencies. GMCC used the DACUM process to generate an inventory of these competencies. An overview of this process will provide background to the origins of the current study.

DACUM

In Boone's conceptual programming model (1985), he says that it is important to establish a link between the adult education organization and its publics when planning a program. Different publics will have different needs, and these needs will lead to specific

educational strategies, learning activities and outcomes.

> Linkage is basic to the entire programming process and consists of four elements: (1) study, analysis, and mapping of the organization's publics; (2) identifying target publics; (3) identifying and interfacing with leaders of target publics; and (4) collaborative identification, assessment, and analysis of needs specific to a target public. (Boone, 1985, p. 89)

With this strong connection to the target public, it is possible to develop programs which will address the needs of the students and the community in which they intend to use their new or enhanced skills.

Recognizing the value of linkages with a target public, the DACUM program planning model provides a process which allows educators to work with representatives of an occupation under review, to determine the range of skills required to perform a job. In a workshop setting, a panel of 8 to 15 typical employers and practitioners meet to produce a skill profile chart which will document the title, general competencies and enabling skills for an occupation. Once the chart has been validated, then "objectives which reflect the required skills or outcomes documented on the skill profile chart" (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 1983, p. 6) will be decided. When the objectives are defined, the instructional design portion of the process can begin. When the process is complete, instructional objectives, instructional plans and evaluation instruments will have been established.

Students, instructors, educational administrators and employers all benefit from the DACUM process. Students have "a clearly defined set of objectives and criteria for evaluation which provide an overall sense of direction" (p. 8). Educational staff have "a logical and thorough process for determining and developing learning resources, teaching techniques, testing procedures, and space and equipment requirements" (p. 8). Employers have "an opportunity to participate directly in both the initial and the ongoing development of training which meets their specific needs" (p. 9). All of the stakeholders have the assurance that what is being taught is applicable to future employment.

Grant MacEwan Community College

As a result of a needs assessment survey conducted by GMCC, which indicated that there was a need for human resource management training at all levels, the decision was made to conduct a curriculum development study. The DACUM process was chosen to gather data.

The DACUM workshops used participants nominated by their human resource management peers. The first workshop, DACUM 1, developed a profile of the bodies of knowledge and categories represented in the human resource management profession, and identified general management competencies. Participants identified 11 major components.

Dacum 2A and 2B used these bodies of knowledge and categories to generate, segregate and prioritize competencies. The two workshops combined to produce the final profile which consisted of 11 categories and a total of 220 competencies. The profile was sent to the 380 members of the Human Resources Management Association of Edmonton (HRMAE) for validation. An additional DACUM, 2C, was convened to further define management competencies. The profile from this workshop consisted of 7 categories and 77 competencies. This profile was sent to 38 managers for validation.

For validation, competencies in both profiles were to be rated: 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = considerably important, 4 = extremely important, and U = unable to judge. Respondents were to determine which statement best described how important the competency was for them to successfully carry out their responsibilities.

In the management profile, under the category "Exhibit Personal Competence", was the competency: "Practice ethical behaviour: maintain confidentiality, demonstrate integrity, demonstrate honesty." Of all the competencies rated in both profiles, this received the highest ranking, 3.9. Of the 38 management surveys completed, 36 rated the competency as extremely important (4).

Data Collection

The following methodology was used in this study to collect data for analysis.

From the nominations made by executive members of the Human Resources Management Association of Edmonton (HRMAE) and the Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA) for the Grant MacEwan Community College DACUM, four participants were randomly chosen. The research participants was limited to allow the study to address the complex issues and range of factors associated with ethical dilemmas. The participants consisted of two women (F1, F2) and two men (M1, M2) all of whom were human resource managers. The four candidates had participated in the DACUM process: F1 in DACUM 2B; F2 in DACUM 1; M1 in DACUM 2A and 3; and M2 in DACUM 2B and 3.

Before data collection began, participants were briefed, and given a package describing the purpose of the study and the procedures that would be used (appendix A). Each individual was told, and it was stressed in the preparatory package, that participation was voluntary; they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. If a participant was to leave, all data related to that individual would be destroyed and a new participant would be selected. Included in the package was a consent form (appendix B) for the subjects to sign indicating his/her willingness to participate.

Subjects were expected to spend between eight and ten hours on the study. They were to participate in individual interviews, a review of the interview transcript, a focus group, and a review of the final research document.

The individual interviews were conducted at each subject's worksite. Three of the interviews were held in the subject's office, while one was conducted in a small conference

room. There was a group of base questions (appendix C) to which each participant was to respond. These questions were to provide a profile of the participant's human resources experience, a description of the company for which they were currently working, the values of the company, personal values and an examination of an ethical dilemma they confronted as a human resource manager.

Participants were given transcripts of their interviews to review for accuracy and for their comments or questions. Only one subject, F2, participated in a follow-up interview. Once all participants had reviewed and made alterations to their transcripts, the four subjects came together as a focus group. The focus group began with a review of the study to date and then proceeded with several open ended questions (appendix D) and a minimum of direction from the researcher.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical principles have been applied to this study.

Before consenting to participate in the study, it was important that subjects understood that they were entering a clear and fair agreement, without any coercion. The preparatory package provided participants with a thorough explanation of the proposed research and the process in which they would be participating.

To protect the participants' privacy, pseudonyms were assigned to each person (M1, M2, F1, F2), and any reference to employers or work-specific information that was essential to the study was reported in broad terms or categories. Even though every attempt was made to maintain anonymity, participants were told that the study was based on a very narrow population and there was a chance that an individual may be recognized or deduced from situations or information presented in the final report. If this was unacceptable to an individual, the person was free to withdraw from the study and any related data was to be destroyed.

The researcher was the only person to have access to all transcripts and tapes of the interviews and focus group. During the study, sensitive material was kept secured at the home of the researcher.

Neither associates of the participants or any organization of which they may be members had access to any of the interviews or related materials. Interested parties have access to the final report in which individuals are not specifically identified, and every attempt has been made to preserve anonymity.

The study was not sponsored and could not offer monetary compensation for participation. Any benefits to subjects were related to the advancement of the human resource management field and training in that profession.

One month after the thesis is bound, all interview and focus group transcripts, tapes and related materials will be destroyed.

When the report is published, each participant will receive either a copy or an abstract of the study, depending on their preference.

Data Analysis

Data were collected using individual interviews and a focus group. Grounded theory procedures and techniques were used for analysis and interpretation of the data.

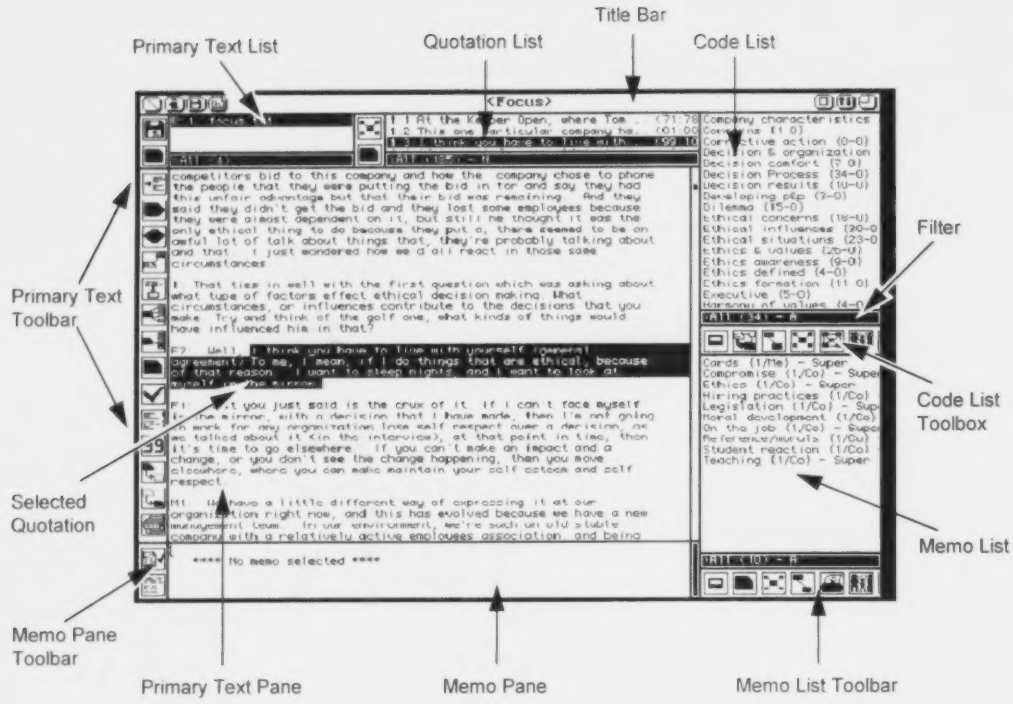
After the interviews were transcribed, textual interpretation could begin using the software program ATLAS/ti (Archiv fur Technik, Lebenswelt und Alltagssprache, Technical University of Berlin). Interaction between the program and the researcher was accomplished through a graphical user interface that partitioned the screen into subdivisions, or windows (see Figure 2). The windows display supported a flexible, non-sequential style of analysis by allowing access to several kinds of information on a related subject. Using the program, the researcher could code text passages, write memos related to the text and codes, develop linkages between codes, concepts, networks and memos, and build models. Each window and its links could be printed as an ASCII file. All of these activities were bundled into one entity, a hermeneutic unit that contained all the data for one topic. Two hermeneutic units were created for this study. The individual interviews became primary text for the first unit, while the focus group transcript became primary text for the second unit.

The interviews were reviewed sentence-by-sentence to determine which phenomena were present. The phenomena identified were given conceptual labels, which in the program were identified as codes. The individual interviews generated 49 codes, while the focus group generated 33 codes (see Table 2). The codes and the related quotations were printed and reviewed to determine their properties and to dimensionalize the data.

When a code and its quotations were printed, the program would provide the information in the format shown in Figure 3. The first four lines describe information about the unit and file containing the code "decision comfort." The information was taken from the hermeneutic unit (HU) Focus. The file for the HU resides on the C drive in the textbank directory, in a file named focus. The HU was edited by the super-user, who, in this case, was the researcher. The information was printed 20 February, 1995 at 15:07:34. There are seven quotations for the code "decision comfort," and all of the quotations were shown when the code was printed. For this example only the first three quotations are shown.

The information before each quotation describes in which primary file the quotation can be found, the number of quotations that had been marked in the file at this point, the line numbers of the text, who marked the text, other codes assigned to the text, and memos attached to the text. For the first quotation, P 1: focus.txt - 1:17 (214:217) (Super) means: the text comes from the first primary file, focus.txt; this was the 17th quotation to be marked in the file; the text can be found on lines 214 to 217; and the text was marked by the super-user. The line beginning with "Codes:" indicates that the quotation has also been assigned to the codes for ethical situations, and ethics and values. The quotation has a memo attached. The memo is identified as "Legislation."

By examining the quotations for the code "decision comfort" the researcher dimensionalized the quotations by placing them on a scale that ranged from comfortable to



Title Bar - The title bar contains: close button; info button, which displays usage statistics; save button; comment button, which edits unit comment; unit title; and buttons which collapse, zoom or resize the window.

Primary Text List - The text files assigned to the unit are listed in this pane. The two buttons to the left assign primary text to the unit and edit primary text comments.

Quotation List - Text which has been assigned a code is listed in this pane. Quotations are prefixed with the number of the file from which it was taken and the order in which it was selected.

Code List - This pane identifies the codes assigned to the text, the number of quotations for each code, and the number of linked codes.

Filter - Below the primary text, quotation, code and memo list panes is reverse text which describes the current filter function. The default is all information in the pane.

Code List Toolbar - Functions affecting the code list can be found here.

Memo List - Memo titles and attributes are listed in this pane.

Memo List Toolbar - The buttons create and edit memos, open a network editor, link memos, print memos and edit memo families.

Memo Pane - The selected memo is displayed in the pane and the related quotation appears highlighted in the primary text pane.

Primary Text Pane - Text of the primary file will appear as read only in this pane.

Memo Pane Toolbar - The two buttons will save the current memo or edit the memo.

Selected Quotation - Primary text can be searched by code, quotation, memo or line number.

Primary Text Toolbar - Various operations affecting the primary text can be accessed from the toolbar.

Figure 2. ATLAS/ti window for the hermeneutic unit editor

Table 2

Codes & Occurrences

Codes	Interviews	Focus group	Combined
Clients	4	0	4
Company objectives	3	0	3
Company characteristics	59	10	69
Company success	5	0	5
Concerns	10	1	11
Contract employees	2	0	2
Corrective action	11	0	11
Decision & organization	6	27	33
Decision comfort	12	7	19
Decision Process	3	34	37
Decision results	15	10	25
Desired skills	1	0	1
Developing p&p	12	3	15
Dilemma	39	15	54
Downsizing	6	0	6
Ethical concerns	16	18	34
Ethical influences	11	30	41
Ethical situations	28	23	51
Ethics & values	20	26	46
Ethics awareness	15	9	24
Ethics defined	7	4	11
Ethics formation	2	11	13
Executive	8	5	13
Experience	9	0	9
Future	17	0	17
Harmony of values	5	4	9
Hiring	15	9	24
HR character	22	16	38
Job dissatisfaction	12	0	12
Job function	51	34	85
Job satisfaction	17	0	17
Legal concerns	7	16	23
Management experience	4	0	4

Table 2 continued

Codes	Interviews	Focus group	Combined
Management Style	6	1	7
Line Managers	21	13	34
Mentoring	1	8	9
No. employees	4	0	4
Performance management	5	1	6
Sexual issues	7	2	9

HU: Focus
File: [C:\TEXTBANK\Focus]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 20 Feb 1995 - 15:07:34

---

7 quotation(s) for code: DECISION COMFORT
Quotation filter: All

P 1: focus.txt - 1:17 (214:217) (Super)
Codes: [Decision comfort] [Ethical situations] [Ethics & values]
Memos: [Legislation]

we've ended up kind of bending the rules and saying, okay, fine, and yet, underneath it just tears at you. You just think, like, it's wrong, it's just wrong.

P 1: focus.txt - 1:20 (227:229) (Super)
Codes: [Decision comfort] [Legal concerns]

we did in one, and won, and felt very good about it because it was absolutely so ludicrous we just said we just can't stand it.

P 1: focus.txt - 1:21 (236:239) (Super)
Codes: [Decision comfort] [Ethical situations] [Legal concerns]
Memos: [Compromise]

You just bite your tongue and you just put the file away and every time you think about, it just makes you want to throw up, to be very honest with you. The money we've given people just makes me sick.

Figure 3. ATLAS/ti text output of the code "decision comfort."

uncomfortable. The "decision comfort" code yielded two quotations that expressed comfort with the decision made, four that expressed discomfort with the decision made and one that was neutral.

The codes were visually networked into six categories: corporate profile (see Figure 4), HR manager profile (see Figure 5), ethical issues (see Figure 6), ethical dilemmas (see Figure 7), process for making ethical decisions (see Figure 8), and teaching ethics. Once the categories were established, each category was examined to determine the conditions that generated it; the context in which it occurred; the strategies used; and the consequences of those strategies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). These features became subcategories which further defined the category. The interviews were reviewed by the researcher to see if the relationship between a category and its subcategories could be verified. As data were examined, additional properties were sought and variations examined. As the process developed, statements of relationships were proposed. Relationships had to be verified and validated by the data and if they were not supported, were discarded.

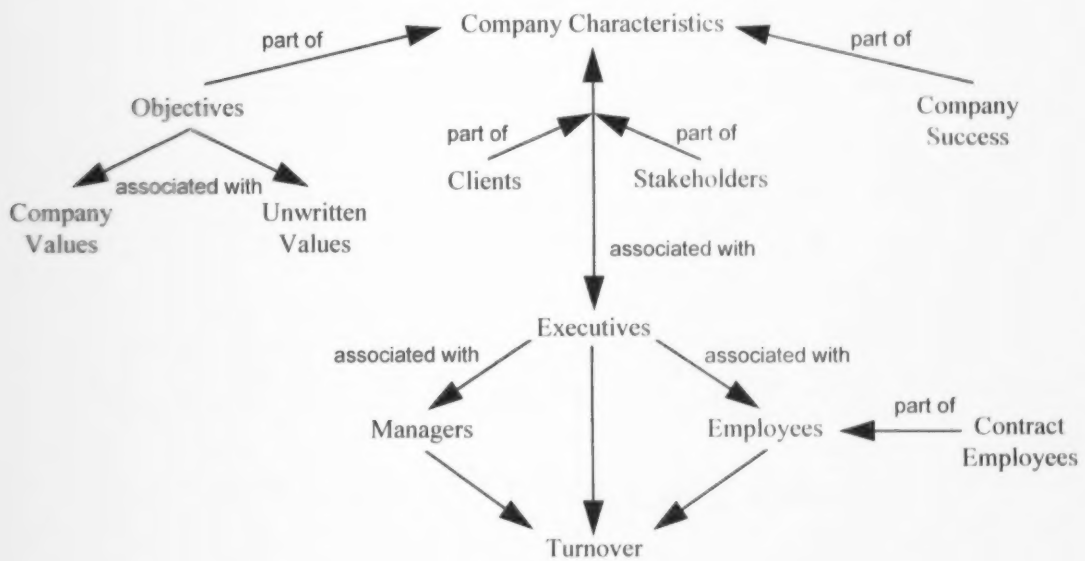


Figure 4. The network of codes for the category "corporate profile."

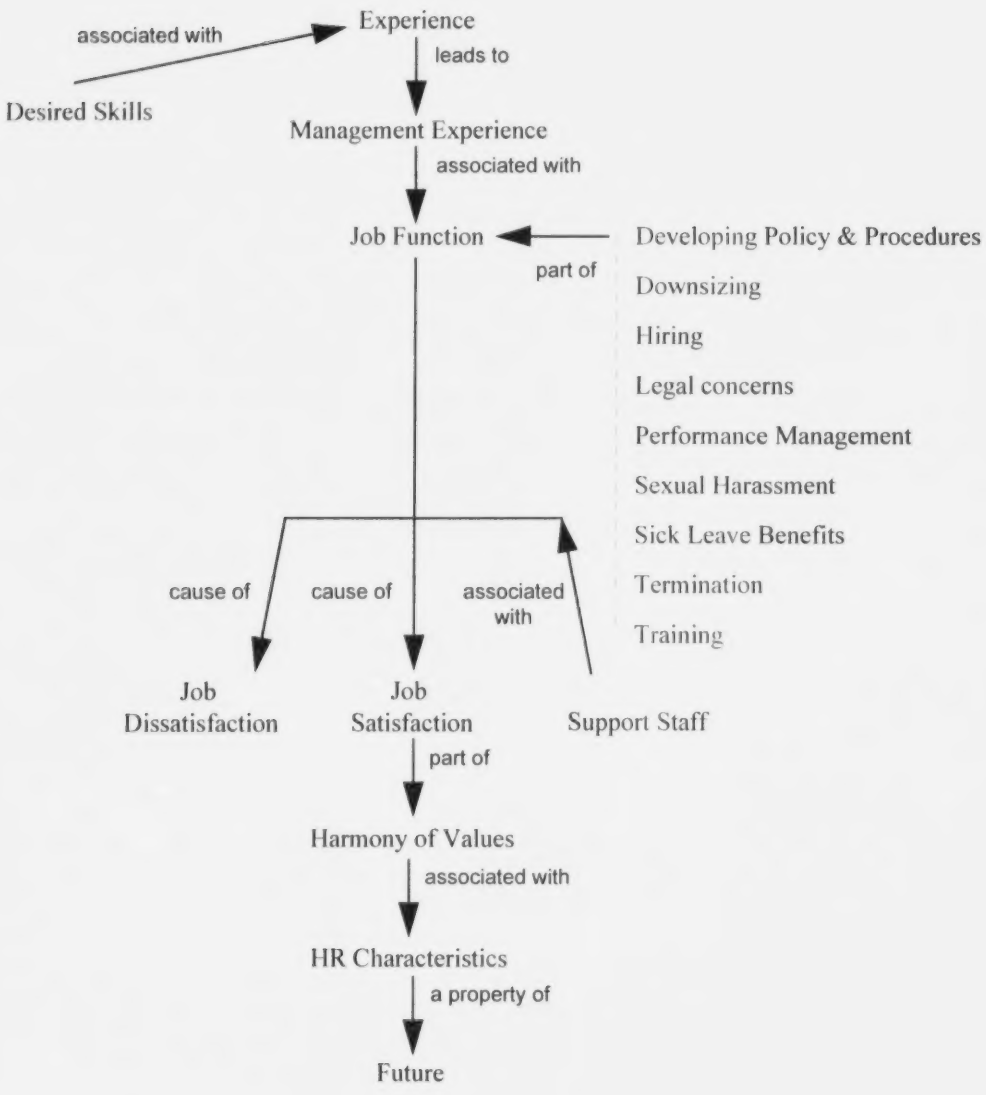


Figure 5. The network of codes for the category "HR manager profile."

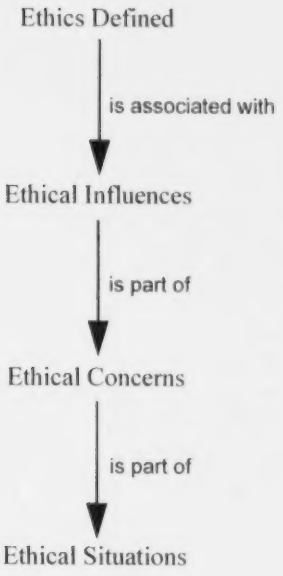


Figure 6. The network of codes for the category "ethical issues."

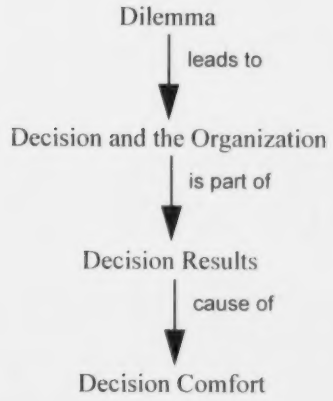


Figure 7. The network of codes for the category "ethical dilemmas."

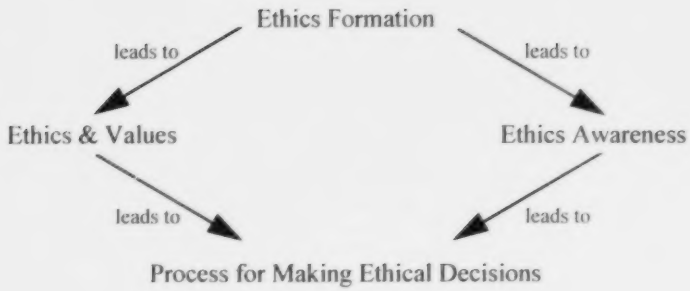


Figure 8. The network of codes for the category "process for making ethical decisions."

To accomplish integration, it was necessary to identify and name a core category, or central phenomenon, from which a story line was formulated describing the properties of the core category. For this study, the category identified as "process for making ethical decisions" became the central phenomenon.

Once the core category was identified, all other categories, now subsidiary categories, were shown to relate to the core category by conditions, context, strategies and/or consequences (see Figure 9). A story line was used to arrange subsidiary categories in a clear and logical fashion. The ordering of categories allowed a hypothetical statement about the resulting relationships to be written. The researcher went back to the data to validate the statement and the order of the categories. The validated statement described the environment in which ethical decisions were made, the elements affecting ethical decisions, the process for making ethical decisions, the application of the process to ethical dilemmas, and the teaching of ethics to human resource students. Using the statement as a guide, the categories were integrated to form a ten-step model that shows a process for making ethical decisions. The model was limited "to those categories, their properties and dimensions, and statements of relationships that exist in the actual data collected" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 112).

Figure 9. The network of subsidiary categories to the core category "process for making ethical decisions."

CHAPTER IV

Interpretation of the Data

> This above all: to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.
>
> Hamlet, Act I, Scene III, Lines 78-80
> Shakespeare

Introduction

This chapter will present the researcher's interpretation of the data generated by the study. The content of this chapter concentrates on the analysis of data collected from the individual interviews of the four subjects and the focus group which brought the four subjects together. The first and second sections will examine the elements that affect ethical decision making. The first section will provide a profile of the companies represented and a general description of the characteristics and job functions of the human resource (HR) managers participating in the study. The second section will analyze the data related to ethical issues. The third section will identify a process for making ethical decisions derived from the data. The fourth section will examine the major ethical dilemmas encountered by the subjects. The final section will review the HR managers' views on teaching ethics to human resources students.

Profiles

The Companies

In the individual interviews, the HR managers were asked about the values and ethics of their employers, and how the employer affected their ethical decisions. The following profiles are not intended to describe the companies in detail, but to establish the elements within the companies that influence or affect ethical decision making. In the interviews and the focus group, the HR managers identified written guidelines, or policies and procedures, as important guides for making decisions. The HR managers also identified external pressures, internal environment, corporate culture, and corporate stakeholders as significant influences when making decisions.

M1 worked for a stable, medium sized company which was part of a larger corporation. It served three masters: customers, shareholders and employees. The primary customers were in industry and transportation, while individual customers provided a small secondary market. Change of any kind happened slowly, as a result the organization took a long term view of business, how it treated customers and how it treated employees. Co-

workers could expect to be together for many years. It was an ideal environment for idealistic, honest workers who wanted a long relationship with an employer.

The company's implicit values were concerned with long term issues that would ensure a viable organization. Employee honesty was important, but because of the expectation that working relationships would be for a long time, honesty was expected to be tempered with compassion and understanding. Openness and loyalty to the company were also valued.

F1 worked for a company that was a diverse service operation which was experiencing major changes in corporate culture. This conservative but flexible, middle of the market organization had a stable work force where each employee was seen as a company representative. There was pride in the corporate image of caring professionalism. Customers of the organization were solicited for feedback that would be reviewed, acknowledged and used to shape services.

The organization's primary concern was sensitivity to individuals. There was a strategic plan in which the internal and external vision was published. The plan incorporated goals, strategies, guidelines for a healthy work environment, and expectations of clients and employees. The plan was developed through a company-wide program which relied on employee contributions and support.

M2 worked for a well-managed, financially stable organization whose primary function was production and sales in a fast changing, highly competitive industry. Employees of this organization needed to be flexible and able to adapt quickly to change so that the company could maintain its leadership position in the market.

This company had an entrenched set of core values and philosophies that drove the organization. These values included trust and respect for the individual, maintaining a high degree of integrity as an organization, encouraging creativity, and an emphasis on team work. These values generated corporate objectives. The objectives relate to the organization's fields of interest, citizenship, customers, employees, and management. From the objectives, practices develop. The core values, objectives and practices were written and published for employees. The core had changed only slightly over the life of the organization, the objectives had adjusted as the ways of doing business changed, and practices changed dramatically over the years to adapt to the market environment.

Implicit values of the company centred on productivity. Its products were developed, produced, marketed, and became obsolete within a two to three year cycle. If a product failed, or an opportunity was missed and a competitor filled the gap, it could take years for the company to recover. As a result there was an emphasis on accelerated product development, production, product quality, and speed to market. Employees were expected to constantly review their work and see how it could be improved to use time efficiently, increase productivity, and maintain a high quality product.

The fourth organization, which was represented by F2, was a medical service company with an excellent reputation that had, over a three year period, undergone major cultural

changes in the corporation. The changes were generated with the support and input of the employees. The organization was open to innovative and creative approaches to problem solving, with an emphasis on a balance between work and private lives.

This organization had a vision of itself as a caring company, striving for excellence. Statements published as part of the corporate vision were concerned about establishing a healthy balance between family and work; recognition of individual and team performance; strengthening feelings of trust, respect and pride; and making total customer satisfaction a company goal.

The Human Resource Managers

The HR managers could not discuss the ethical dilemmas that they faced without describing the functions and skills needed to carry out their duties. Both the interviews and the focus group were sources for this information and the following profile was composed from these sources. During the interviews HR managers were asked if they liked their jobs, what they liked best about them and what they liked least about their work. The intent of the researcher was to establish the attitudes of the HR managers towards their work and the climate in which the HR managers made their ethical decisions.

The population in this study represented 65 years of experience in human resources, of which 50 years were in human resource management. The managers oversaw between 325 to 1,200 employees.

The HR managers participating in this study described themselves as human resources generalists. They explained that they were responsible, in varying degrees, for recruiting staff, performance evaluation, terminating staff, applying policies and procedures, facilitating salary administration, benefits, compensation, employee training and professional development, career counselling, and maintaining employee records and files.

> I get called things like Terminator. I get called things like Legal Beagle. I'm pretty well involved in every kind of... People don't come to Human Resources unless there's a problem. Okay; so we're problem solvers. It could be salary, it could be benefits. It could be education. It could be personality conflict. It could be career planning. It could be somebody to let off some steam, just needing a place to close the door and close the drapes and have a cry. (F1, personal communication, October 29, 1993)

All of the HR managers described themselves as objective problem solvers, who must be willing to investigate and research issues, concerns and trends. They all spoke of having an ombudsman function within their organizations. As a result of this position, the HR managers felt that they could not show any favouritism, but must treat everyone equitably. As M1 explained, friendships outside of other human resource people are difficult and viewed with suspicion. There is the risk that an HR manager will compromise his or her objectivity when dealing with friends, or dealing with people in conflict with any of the HR

manager's friends.

The HR managers all described changes that were affecting their organizations, either downsizing, or a flattening of the organizational structure to distribute power throughout the organization. With these changes, the HR managers found they were teaching line managers how to manage, and in the process they were showing the managers how to perform what were once traditional human resource functions. They were providing support to line managers, by coaching or counselling them in effective team work, management techniques and procedures, performance evaluation, and applying policies and procedures.

The HR managers also provided support to their company executives. Each of the HR managers described situations where company executives expected them to be advisors on issues and problems affecting staff, management and the organization. Because the executives in the companies consider the human resources department the home of ethics, or as a focal point for ethical and sensitive issues that affected the organizations, they expected the HR managers to help facilitate the ethical decision making process in the organization. Three of the four HR managers had been given the opportunity to become part of the management team and partners in the corporate decision making process.

All of the managers, to varying degrees, were responsible for proposing, devising, amending, and implementing policies and procedures. Generally they would make policy recommendations, feeding ideas and practical solutions to the policy making group on issues and problems affecting the organization. In most cases, final approval for policies and procedures came from an executive committee, supervisory group or policy committee. The HR managers described policies and procedures as being established for the majority of the staff and reflecting the organizations' business strategies.

Managers M2 and F2 discussed the changing attitude in their companies towards the concept of policies. Policies tended to suggest that situations were black and white, ignoring a spectrum of grays. This perspective was no longer suitable to the more flexible and open corporate cultures found in their companies. The preference of the companies was to support policies with guidelines that recognize a range of possibilities and provide some leeway for decisions.

The managers identified a potential for high levels of stress in their positions. Managers F1, F2 and M2 explained that employees see the HR department as a place to resolve problems of all kinds. It is not unusual for an HR manager to be confronted with an individual who is emotionally distraught, or other emotionally charged situations. The HR managers felt that they needed to be able to empathize and direct people to appropriate resources for help and support. This may mean listening to someone complain about an ineffective manager, or it may mean having to engage the services of the employee assistance provider to address the needs of a group facing the death of a co-worker. HR managers also identified the need to understand that they have limitations as to how much they can do to help, and how much they should do.

All of the HR managers were active in the human resources community outside of their organization. They were accessible and open to requests to discuss concerns and questions related to human resources from colleagues, students in human resources programs and interested parties. Three of the managers, M1, F1 and F2 were teaching in Human Resources programs, sharing their experiences with students preparing to enter the field.

All of the HR managers interviewed for this study enjoyed their jobs and were proud of the organizations for which they worked.

"I just love the variety, and I love the need to be adaptable and flexible and wear all of these hats" (F1, 1993).

> Many days that you start out with, 'here's what I'm planning to do today', and the end of the day you look at that list and realize that because of the way the day has gone, you haven't done any of them, yet you can still walk away feeling that you've had a productive day, because you've helped solve various problems that have come up. (M2, personal communication, November 12, 1993)

"Love dealing with people, feeling I've made a difference... I think my own recognition doesn't come from my peers, or my boss. It comes from the staff" (F2, personal communication, October 15, 1993).

> The thing I like most about this work and my job is that from this perspective in human resources, you know what's going on in the organization a lot more than other people know what's going on... You have many insights in terms of how people are doing in the organization. You have some effect on that through your own activities. And you have access to a lot of the plans the organization has in terms of what it wants to do and where it wants to go. That's never, never ceased to be interesting. (M1, personal communication, October 15, 1993)

When asked about job dissatisfaction, each HR manager had a different answer. The individual responses were a reflection of personal values, as well as an indication of corporate and working environments. In some cases, as with M1 and M2, their dissatisfactions were foreshadowing their major dilemmas.

"Here's an awful lot of hours. You get to a point where sometimes it's very difficult to keep your whole life in balance, and there's a lot of times where the career seems to take away from the personal" (F1, 1993).

"Change happens slowly and sometimes mysteriously in our organization, so you have to have patience and not become too frustrated with how slowly things will change" (M1, 1993).

"If I had to be like the president and go to the board meetings every month, I'd be long

gone. I can't stand the politics, that kind of stuff" (F2, 1993).

> What I don't like is when you know there have been ample opportunities for a manager to be proactive and come and get you involved early on in the process, and they haven't, and as a result you end up dealing with a situation that you look back on and know it could have been handled better or differently. (M2, 1993)

From the interviews and focus group it was evident that there were other areas of dissatisfaction for the HR managers. Both F1 and M2 described frustration in having to prove that the human resource function is an integral part of an organization and that it serves a valuable function. M1 explained that it is easier for executives to understand the ramifications of a production group or design department being cut than the loss of a human resource department. Human resource is an area whose major functions can be out-sourced. This pressure has managers evaluating their contribution to the organization and improving those contributions to provide strategic, or value added functions to the organization. As F2 explained, an HR manager needs to know what she is offering before she can help the executive understand the value of the human resource department to the organization.

Considerable discussion was generated during the focus group around situations that led to unnecessary legal action or unfair cash settlements. It was in this area that the HR managers' values and ethics were most challenged. When a situation stopped following what the managers believed to be acceptable behaviour, and was resolved in an unfair or unacceptable manner, the situation was rationalized by describing the settlement as a business decision. All of the HR managers had examples of cases that had either gone to court, or had a substantial cash settlement to the employee.

Personal values are a factor in making ethical decisions. When company values, ethics, policies and procedures, guidelines or mandates do not address an issue or circumstance, the HR manager will rely on his or her own values to determine the right or wrong of a situation. Three values common to all of the HR managers were honesty, equality and integrity.

"I don't mind if he (a manager) thinks I'm a fool, that's okay, but if he thinks I'm deceitful or not honest, then that's not acceptable" (M1, focus group, April 14, 1994).

"Honesty is definitely one (value). Fairness and equality. With fairness and equality, treating people the way they should be treated. I don't like hidden agendas. I don't like game playing. I don't like politics" (F2, 1993).

"The values I have are respect for individuals. I believe I have a high level of honesty and integrity. Those are some of the things that I very much value, and find very important" (M2, 1993).

"Trust is very important to me. If I can't trust the person that I'm working for, then I can't work there" (F1, 1993).

There was a definite compatibility between the HR managers' personal values and those of their employers. All of the HR managers agreed that personal and corporate ethics and values needed to be in harmony.

"When I joined the company, and found out what the core values of the organization were and how closely they echoed what my own values were, it made me realize... that's what makes it a good company to work with" (M2, 1993).

"If I can't feel I'm right, then I can't do this job, then I'm not making decisions that are in line with this corporation, they have to be in tandem" (F1, 1993).

> What I've looked for within the company is a place that I can go work and feel good about, not only the contribution that I'm making, but the contribution that the organization is making, and that my personal values aren't in conflict with the organization. (M1, 1993)

Ethical Elements

In the interviews and focus group, the HR managers discussed elements that affect ethical decision making, but were not specific to the process. These ethical elements, like the corporate environment and the HR managers' job functions, create a background that supports and influences the ethical decision making process.

The management competency in the Grant MacEwan Community College DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) phrased as "practice ethical behaviour" was vague and ill defined. The researcher was attempting to clarify the meaning when asking each of the subjects to provide a definition for ethics. Some of the responses were:

"Ethics is being able to look myself in the mirror after I make decisions; waking up in the morning and saying, 'Hey, you're a good person'" (F1, 1993).

"Ethics in this company means that you go back to your mission, which is to serve your three masters, and you're trying to find a solution that each of your three masters would be satisfied with" (M1, 1993).

"For me, ethics is more a protection, and a fairness" (F2, 1993).

"Ethics to me is tied back with the whole concept of honesty and integrity. Ethics to me really means, if you have as a company, or as an individual, or as a discipline, a code of ethics... that is spelling out how it is that you're going to do your business" (M2, 1993).

The HR managers appeared to agree with Kant's concept, that ethics defined what is correct and acceptable behaviour. They believed that what was correct and acceptable varied between individuals depending on the culture, environment and family in which a person was raised. They all agreed that ethics are part of a person's conscience, and develop from an individual's values. The HR managers felt that these personal ethics determine the way in which individuals conduct themselves, and the way they feel they should be conducting themselves. They also thought that ethics were a product of a person's environment which

provided a frame of reference from which to make choices and decisions.

"We learned our ethics from our parents, and our values through the educational system, religion and all sorts of different sources" (M1, 1994).

"I believe you're either honest or you're dishonest. Your perception of honesty and dishonesty can differ between individuals, between cultures, all of those things... I don't think you can define ethics. I think it's a very personal thing" (F1, focus group, 1994).

> You can give people the process for decision making. You can expose them to the fact that there are all these other perceptions. You can possibly help them to understand that there will have to be, within themselves, some paradigm shifts, to take away what they feel about something and possibly shift that (to a new perspective). (F1, 1994)

> Our view of ethical business practices is not necessarily shared by younger or older people, or people from other cultures or backgrounds, and also not necessarily shared by people who are in extremely difficult economic situations. So, there's a number of other factors that people don't intuitively understand, that other people may view decisions from quite a different perspective, and it may cast a different light on your decision, and (your perspective) as an HR person. (M1, 1994)

Since human resources professionals face ethical issues in most of their primary job functions, the HR managers were asked if they were always aware of ethics.

"Not consciously. I think subconsciously, yes" (M2, 1993).

"Yes. Always think of the ethical part of things" (F2, 1993).

"Yes" (F1, 1993).

> I'd say yes. Very aware of ethics in an HR role, because a lot of what you're doing is making decisions about what's going to happen to people... I'm often aware of the choices that are going to be made and what the results will be. And a lot of those choices are ethical choices in terms of what's the right thing to do for your three masters. (M1, 1993)

Of the 24 quotations for the code "ethical awareness", 15 were from the interviews and 9 from the focus group. The quotations from the interviews could be dimensionalized into the properties of awareness activated by personal ethics, corporate ethics, or a combination of the two. Of the 15 quotations from the interviews, 4 indicated ethical awareness was activated by personal ethics, 3 were activated by corporate ethics, and 8 indicated that ethical awareness was activated by both sets of ethics. The nine quotations from the focus group were more polarized. Six of the quotations indicated that ethical awareness was activated by personal ethics, while three indicated that ethical awareness was activated by

corporate ethics.

All of the HR managers could identify written and implied values that were important to the companies for which they worked. They were also able to define their personal values. Generally, both sets of values were compatible. As the HR managers described situations, they would, without prompting, indicate which values they were using to make decisions, and which specific values were affected.

"I feel if you've got a strong, ingrained set of values that govern how you live your life, you're going to know when you step outside of that" (M2, 1993).

"I'm often aware of the choices that are going to be made and what the results will be. And a lot of those choices are ethical choices in terms of what's the right thing to do for the three masters" (M1, 1993).

"I see two forms of ethics. I see my own personal and I see the organization's, and sometimes the two don't run along the same route" (F1, 1993).

The code "ethics and values" generated 20 quotations from the interviews and 26 quotations from the focus group. The quotations were dimensionalized into ethics and values of the company, those that were personal and those of the employees. The interviews generated two quotations based on company ethics and values, two that were personal, two that were employee based, three quotations that combined company and employee ethics and values, and eleven that combined company and personal ethics and values. The focus group only generated quotations based on company and/or personal ethics and values. Company ethics and values were quoted 14 times, personal ethics and values were quoted 9 times, and 2 were a combination.

The properties were identified for each quotation. From the interviews, company ethics and values were concerned with doing what was right (1), and choosing ethical decisions for strategic gain (1). Personal ethics and values dealt with doing what was right (1), and identifying the source of ethical solutions (1). Employee quotations were about trust (1), and fairness (1). The combination of company and employee quotations was about doing what was right (2), and fairness (1). The eleven quotations for the combination of company and personal values and ethics were as follows: maintaining corporate image (1), making a meaningful contribution to the corporation (1), doing what was right (2), fairness (1), balancing corporate and personal ethics and values (4), men and women and their ethical differences (1), and strength of ethical convictions (1).

From the focus group, the properties identified for the combination of company and personal ethics and values were fairness (1), and balance (1). The nine quotations for personal ethics and values covered: doing what was right (3), integrity (1), idealism (1), ethical perspective (1), and honesty (3). The 14 company quotations concerned: being ethical (2), doing what was right (2), doing what is ethically wrong (2), business decisions (3), legislation (1), closure to problems (1), and fairness (3).

Each of the HR managers emphasized that balance between personal ethics and

corporate ethics is essential for a good working relationship between them and their employers. During discussions about dilemmas, the researcher noted that an imbalance between corporate and personal ethics can create a high level of stress for the HR manager and produce a situation where day-to-day conflicts become dilemmas.

Stress can be generated when there is an emotional attachment to the personal ethics and values that are the basis for a decision. "If you are going to make an ethical decision, you have to leave your emotional baggage to the side, otherwise your decision isn't going to be ethical, it's going to be topical. It's going to suit your purposes for the moment. And, that may be the hardest part of making good decisions, is keeping your emotions out of it, and just trying to look at it from a different perspective" (M1, 1993).

Even with their considerable experience as HR managers, the four subjects revealed their emotional ties to decisions and circumstances that did not agree with their values:

"You're giving money when you shouldn't, yeah, for the wrong reason. And that bugs me on a continual basis" (F2, focus group, 1994).

"We've ended up kind of bending the rules and saying, okay, fine, and yet, underneath it just tears at you. You just think, it's wrong, it's just wrong" (F2, 1994).

"You just bite your tongue and you just put the file away and every time you think about it, it just makes you want to throw up" (M1, 1994).

> So, you go about the process that you do all the time, of trying to convince somebody as to the rationality and the logic and the ethics of all of your decisions. They (the human rights commission) don't buy that. You're just wrong. I don't know quite why or how, but you're just wrong, so you go through that process until you can't stand it any more. (M1, 1994)

A company that has written guidelines, policies and procedures provides staff with directions for making decisions. Using corporate values instead of personal values will reduce emotional attachment to ethical decisions. "If you are in a company that has some gray areas, it certainly would be valuable to know, in writing, what the parameters are for those areas, because, in essence, if you're in an organization where values are clearly stated, at least you have some guidelines." (F2, 1994)

The code "ethical influences" generated 11 quotations from the interviews and 30 from the focus group. The quotations were dimensionalized according to internal influences, which were generated by personal beliefs; external influences, which were generated by factors outside of the individual; and a combination of internal and external influences. The 11 quotations from the interviews generated 3 quotations that represented external influences, 4 that were internal and 4 that were a combination of influences. The focus group generated 15 quotations that had external influences, 11 that were internal and 2 that were a combination.

The external influences have an impact on the how an ethical decision is made. External influences included the advice of experts, the policies, procedures and mandate of the company, having to explain a decision to the employees or other managers, employee associations, government legislation, other human resources professionals, and parties from outside of the organization. The internal influences that have an impact on a decision include a need for inner peace, maintenance of self-esteem and self-respect, maintenance of personal convictions, and maintenance of personal ethics and values.

"Our expression corporately is, 'Will we be able to explain it?' Because it doesn't seem to matter what decisions you make these days, whether it's personal decisions or whether it's decisions you're making for the corporation, there's a lot of scrutiny on everything" (M1, 1994).

"If I can't face myself with a decision that I have made, then I'm not going to work for any organization and lose self-respect over a decision" (F1, 1994).

The code "ethical concerns" generated 16 quotations from the interviews and 18 from the focus group. The quotations were dimensionalized into personal concerns, corporate concerns and the combination of personal and corporate concerns. Of the 16 quotations from the interviews, 3 dealt with personal concerns, 8 were corporate and 5 were a combination. Of the 18 quotations from the focus group 16 were corporate and 2 were a combination.

The ethical concerns of the HR managers dealt with circumstances that had the potential to develop into problems. One concern that all the subjects had was about the study and how the information would be used. "I've told you some things that I wouldn't want you to tell anybody else" (M1, 1993).

Other concerns were:

"I would do anything to keep this organization's name right, as I would in my personal life... I would never want us to be seen in an improper light from an ethical stand point" (F2, 1993).

"We try to look at each decision, small ones and big ones, and say, well, if it was greed, or if it was questioned, or if it hit the paper, can we stand up with a straight face and explain, at least what the reasons were" (M1, 1994).

"Ethically tough to do if the policy that you're considering, you don't personally agree with, and you know that a lot of people in the organization don't personally agree with it" (M1, 1994).

Ethical situations represented problems that the HR managers had faced, or were facing at work and in their personal lives. The code "ethical situations" generated 28 quotations from the interviews and 23 quotations from the focus group. These quotations were dimensionalized into groupings that represented ethical situations that occurred inside the companies, situations outside the company and situations that included both environments. Of the 28 quotations generated by the interviews, one described a situation that included both environments, the other 27 quotations dealt with situations that occurred

inside the company. Of the 23 quotations from the focus group, four concerned outside situations, 15 were inside situations and four were a combination of environments.

The properties of each ethical situation were also identified. The one quotation from the interviews that included both environments, concerned corporate culture conflicting with the environment outside the organization. Quotations about situations inside the company were identified as follows: abuse of system (1), business decisions conflicting with ethics (1), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) compromising corporate values (2), coaching colleagues (1), compatibility of personal and corporate values (2), maintaining confidentiality (4), preserving corporate image (1), providing customer service (1), making the right decision (2), hit lists (2), men's ethics vs women's ethics (1), enforcing nepotism policy (1), abuse of sick leave (2), terminations (6), and the value of HR (1).

The four quotations from the focus group that represented situations outside the companies, were all concerned with not accepting an unfair advantage. The four situations that included both environments were identified as cheating (1), human rights (2), and media problems (1). The remaining 15 quotations describe situations inside the companies and were identified as: maintaining confidentiality (1), making the right decision (4), fairness (1), enforcing nepotism policy (2), and paying the undeserving (7). All the situations considered dilemmas have been compiled in appendix E.

In situations where the outcome conflicts with personal and corporate ethics, and appears to be unfair or unjust, it can be difficult for the HR manager to resolve the incongruity. When their companies chose to avoid litigation and pay grievors what the HR managers considered an undeserved and unfair settlement, they found solace in seeing the circumstances in terms of ethical versus business decisions. "Do you dig in your heels and pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees or do you settle for $20,000 more than you had intended? Now, then it becomes a business decision" (F1, 1994). The right business decision can appear to be ethically wrong.

Personal and corporate values may seem to take second place to a sound business decision, in order that the corporate image and reputation stay unblemished. During the focus group, the HR managers explained that a court case can create a great deal of negative publicity which will not balance a legal victory. The public may not remember the details or even if the company had a valid case, but it will remember that the company went to court against an individual. The HR managers indicated that, in ideal circumstances, employees will leave an organization believing that they have been dealt with in a fair and just manner and will not libel their former employer.

> How we make the business decision is we may feel that paying someone out is not the right thing to do, however, the publicity that you get by having your company's name in the paper, even if you're right, it's there and people remember seeing it... Nobody ever reads the back page to see the company won the case... They don't see that, what they

see is the other part and the publicity that it can bring the organization is such that I think that becomes part of the business decision. When you say, you're right, ethically we know we could win, however, the negative publicity that we have to go through, it just isn't worth it for what ultimately is in the majority of the cases not a big sum of money as far as we're concerned. (M2, focus group, 1994)

Ethical Decision Making Process

The company profiles, the HR manager profile, and the examination of ethical elements affecting the HR managers have established the environment and the influences that affect the ethical decision making process of HR managers. The HR managers indicated that they make decisions in diverse and multifaceted circumstances. As they described major dilemmas, and discussed other ethical decisions they had made as HR managers, a process for making ethical decisions was evident. The process was the same for minor conflicts as it was for the major dilemmas.

The ten steps of the model are:

1. awareness of potential problem
2. review values affected by situation
3. compare values to situation
4. evaluate compatibility of values to the situation
5. decide if a problem exists
6. gather information
7. conclusion
8. review action for consequences
9. decide how action will be managed
10. implement action

The ten-step, ethical decision making model (see Figure 10) that emerges differs from the Frankel model reviewed in Chapter Two. The study model was synthesized from the data generated by the interviews and focus group, whereas the Frankel model was an adaptation of ideas around ethical decision making. The Frankel model was intended to be a tool to increase sensitivity, develop an ability to think and develop an ability to act in situations concerned with ethical thought and action. The study model is not meant to be prescriptive. It shows a process in which HR managers engage to solve ethical problems. The model focuses on the thoughts and actions generated by situations that the HR managers face, and which draw on their experience to yield an acceptable solution.

Most of the process described by the model occurs as an internal dialogue that the HR managers have with themselves. If the ethical decision is one being made by a group or a committee, the dialogue would be expressed in conversations, discussions or debates

POTENTIAL PROBLEM	Awareness
DETERMINE PROBLEM	Review Values What is being affected? corporate values/ethics personal values/ethics Compare Values to Situation This is the situation This is the value/ethic affected Evaluate Compatibility Is the situation in harmony with the values/ethics Is there a significant conflict between the situation and the values/ethics Conclusion There is/isn't a problem
DETERMINE ACTION	Gather Information Research topic Discuss problem with HR colleague/s Contact content expert Choose Action From the options that develop from information gathering, choose a course of action Review Action What are the possible repercussions? Who will be affected? How will the company be affected? What are the short and long-term outcomes? Decide How Action Will Be Managed Develop a plan to implement action Implement Action

Figure 10. A ten-step ethical decision making model.

Note: Shaded background represents: experience, company ethics and values, personal ethics and values, and ethical elements.

between members of the group, similar to the discussions described by M2 between himself and line managers when attempting to resolve a performance problem. "We've both talked about it, and we're not 100 percent comfortable, but we're not uncomfortable enough to stop the process, we feel that there are some issues that need to be dealt with" (M2, 1993).

The model is not intended to establish a predetermined order of steps, even though the sequence tends to follow a logical progression. The circumstances will determine how the steps are followed and whether any loops or repetition of steps will occur. Later, in some of the examples drawn from the interviews and the focus group, it may seem that steps blend into each other, especially those steps used to evaluate the situation and those around choosing and implementing an action. The researcher believes that all of the steps are performed, but with experience they happen quickly and are taken for granted. This is similar to the process described in the Frankel model, where "much of it actually goes on unconsciously and intuitively" (Gellerman, Frankel, Landenson, 1990, p. 71).

There are other similarities between the two models. Frankel says that ethical sensitivity triggers the process. The HR managers work in an environment where their primary job functions deal with ethics. Each of the HR managers indicated that they were always aware of ethics, if not consciously, then subconsciously. Their sensitivity is identified in Frankel's model as the stream of consciousness which is the ground in which the decision making process takes place.

For the process to start, an HR manager would need the supporting environment with the accompanying ethical influences, an expectation of having to make ethical decisions, and a knowledge and understanding of corporate and personal values. The process begins with an awareness that there is a potential problem. An analysis to determine if there is a problem begins; there is a review of values or ethics to see which may be compromised. Then those values or ethics which may be affected are compared to the situation, and an evaluation is done to determine the compatibility between the situation and the values or ethics affected. A conclusion is reached as to whether there is a problem that needs to be resolved. If there is a problem that needs resolution, the next four steps will determine what will be done. Gathering information will clarify the situation and may indicate which action or actions could provide possible solutions. From the actions possible, one is chosen. The action is reviewed to determine possible repercussions, identify individuals and groups affected by the action, the short and long term outcome of the action, and the effect of the action on the company. If there are several actions possible, the "choosing and review" steps will be repeated for each option. When the action is accepted, it is necessary to determine how it will be managed. The final step is to implement the action by following the plan.

Awareness can be a subtle prick of conscience, "there's something that's bothering me about a situation" (M2, 1993), or an assault on deeply held values, "you can't do that" (F1, 1993). The awareness can arise from an individual responding to a situation, circumstance, a

group of people or another individual.

A review of values will determine which values may be affected by the situation, "what I can do is step back and say, well the values of the company are this and the values I have are this" (M2, 1993).

Then it is possible to compare the personal and/or corporate ethics and values to the circumstances: "I look at these (values) and look at this versus this whole situation" (M2, 1993). To gain a clear understanding of the situation, the HR manager will determine the setting, participants, and affected parties. The HR manager may also need to decide if the situation is trivial and worth concern, or if it is a technical situation which has a technical solution, not an ethical solution.

Evaluating the compatibility of the values/ethics to the situation will clarify any discrepancies such as, "are we doing the right thing with this employee?" (M2, 1993).

At this point, the HR manager will determine whether there is a problem that needs a solution, or if there is no need to proceed further.

Once a conclusion has been reached, specific action is determined and evaluated. More information may need to be gathered, "I collected data, collected data, collected data to the point that I had something to say" (F2, 1994). This could mean consulting with a content expert, discreetly contacting peers to review or consult with them on the situation, contacting and interviewing the people affected by the situation, or researching material related to the problem. It is useful for HR managers to view the situation from various perspectives, applying values that may affect the situation. It is at this point where they need personal flexibility. They will also need to recognize the influence of their personal values.

Having gathered information related to the situation, it may be possible to choose an action. The action should be fair and equitable, "We really haven't given this person a fair shake and therefore this is the direction that we should be moving in, or yes, we have and therefore we should march on because we're being very unfair to the employee if we don't finish the process" (M2, 1993).

When choosing an action, an assessment of the situation and the repercussions of the action are made. "If I make this decision it's going to have to be applied to everyone. I have to treat everyone fairly, equitably" (F1, 1994). HR managers ask themselves: Will the action have long term effects or is it an immediate, short term solution? What are the influences affecting the action and who are the stakeholders? Who will be affected by the action and how will the action impact on all participants? How will the action be viewed by those outside of the situation?

The review of the action takes into account what the risks are and whether they are worth taking. If the risks are acceptable, how the action will be managed is determined. This can include deciding how the action will be applied, how the people involved will be informed of the action, how the action will be supervised or even if the situation will be

allowed to continue. Then the action is implemented.

The process is not necessarily linear, but can have movement back and forth between steps. As more is understood or revealed about a situation, it is possible that the values or ethics affected can change, or the need for action may disappear.

An example of how the process could be used is illustrated in Table 3. The scenario, of arriving at a quiet street corner that has a "do not walk" signal, can take seconds to play, from arrival at the corner to crossing the street.

Dilemmas

In their individual interviews, the subjects were asked, "What do you consider the most serious ethical dilemma that you've encountered?" (appendix C) One manager was concerned with unfair hiring practices, another with the unfair termination of an employee, the third had a personal concern with access to information, and the fourth spoke in general terms about employees abusing the trust of the employer. As these dilemmas are examined, the conflict of two apparent goods, as dilemma is defined in Chapter I, will be identified as will the steps of the model.

Hiring practices

This dilemma forced the manager to evaluate her relationship with her employer. The two goods that came in conflict were the belief in equal opportunities for all people applying for a job, and maintaining the status quo of the company.

The organization was looking for a middle management candidate. There were in excess of 200 applications for the position. The manager was told by the company's executive committee that she would be wasting her time reviewing female applicants. The messenger was told, by the HR manager, in no uncertain terms, that what was being done was discriminatory, and from a human rights perspective it was not an acceptable position for the organization to take.

When she discussed the problem with her manager, he was appalled, but unable to react. He reminded the HR manager that corporate culture and the composition of the executive committee was about to change.

The manager felt that she had a choice, to let her personal ethics get involved, or to "look at the corporate ethics and determine why this decision was being made and justify it. ... That was the deciding factor for me. That somebody cared enough for me, respected me enough and trusted me enough to say, 'you're going to be wasting your time bringing in a female at this point in time.' That alone ended up cutting the resumes I had to go through down to about 75" (F1, 1993). Even though the manager believed that women should be considered and have the opportunity to apply for similar positions, circumstances at the time did not allow that to happen. Understanding the situation, knowing that there were executive officers who believed strongly in the abilities of women, and knowing that the executive

Table 3

The Ten-Step Ethical Decision Making Model Applied to the Scenario of Crossing Against a "Don't Walk" Light

Steps	Actions
Awareness	As you approach a quiet street corner you are aware of the "Don't Walk" light.
Review Values	The values affected are those associated with following the rules of the law and a personal desire not to waste time.
Compare Values to Situation	There is a "Don't Walk" light, and no traffic. If you are going to follow the law, you will not walk against the light. If you are going to save time, you will walk against the light.
Evaluate Compatibility	Even though it is the law not to cross against the light, you really do not want to wait for the light to change.
Conclusion	Decide that there is a problem.
Gather Information	The light still shows "Don't Walk". There is no traffic from which you need protection so the signal is not necessary at this time. There are no police visible to enforce the law.
Choose Action	Your options are to cross against the light, or to wait for a "Walk" light. You choose to walk against the light.
Review Action	You are the only one affected by the decision. There is no risk to you. You will save seconds.
Decide How Action Will Be Managed	You will look both ways before walking across the street, against the light.
Implement Action	You walk across the street, against the light, and arrive safely on the other side before the light changes.

group was about to change significantly, made the situation palatable.

Reflecting on her decision to follow the directive, the manager was satisfied with the choice she made. At the time of the interview, the organization had a new president who was implementing major corporate changes. If the circumstances were repeated under the new president, she would not accept the direction. It could be another 15 years before there was a new president. In this situation, waiting 15 years to rectify a situation would be too long.

The manager felt that she had license to be comfortable with her decision. "I made it very apparent that it was an unacceptable decision, or process, and even though I had no control of the outcome, I voiced an opinion. It's like having the privilege of voting and not voting, you don't have license to comment on what happens within the government (if you don't vote). I gave an opinion, I put in a vote, so, I had license to say what I needed to say, and once again, I had a manager that supported that" (1993).

How the ethical decision making process was used by F1 to resolve the dilemma of unfair hiring practices is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

The Ten-Step Ethical Decision Making Model Applied to F1's Dilemma of Unfair Hiring Practices

Steps	Actions
Awareness	The manager is told she would be wasting her time reviewing female applicants for a middle management position.
Review Values	The HR manager believes women should have an opportunity to compete for management positions. There is Human Rights legislation against discriminatory hiring practices.
Compare Values to Situation	The HR manager believes women should have equal opportunities. Legislation decrees that there will not be discriminatory hiring. Women are not to be screened for a management position.
Evaluate Compatibility	The situation is incompatible with the HR manager's values and legislation.

Table 4 continued

Steps	Actions
Conclusion	Decide that there is a problem.
Gather Information	The HR manager discusses the situation with her manager. He reminds her that a new president will soon be head of the organization, and this will lead to a new corporate culture.
Choose Action	The HR manager chooses to stay, review only male applicants for the management position, and tell the executive committee the error of their ways.
Review Action	The HR manager will keep a job she likes. A man will get the management position. The executive committee will be admonished.
Decide How Action Will Be Managed	Only male applicants will be reviewed. The executive committee will be told what is being done is discriminatory and an unacceptable position for the company to take
Implement Action	Hire a man for the job. Admonish the executive committee.

Termination

A flamboyant, outgoing, vivacious woman was overheard exchanging gossip about the organization's CEO. News of the gossip reached the ear of the CEO. The HR manager considered the situation to be one of several harmless indiscretions that the woman had made.

The CEO contacted the HR manager and told her to terminate the woman: "We want her gone. She starts rumours and she is flighty" (F2, 1993). After asking the CEO for specific information, none was forthcoming.

When the corporate lawyer was contacted, it was evident that the woman could be released if she was given a suitable severance package and an explanation for her dismissal. The CEO refused to provide a severance package and insisted that the woman be terminated. The HR manager refused to terminate the employee unless she was given a reasonable

severance package. "I'm as stubborn as can be, and it wasn't fair. And I wasn't going to do it" (1993). The two goods in conflict became maintaining a favourable relationship with the CEO, or defending the right of the employee, who was being unfairly terminated, to a reasonable severance package.

Over the next two years, there was a struggle of wills. The department for which the woman worked was disbanded. The department, which was in a precarious position before the situation developed, may have been cut eventually, but the cut appeared to be tied to the attempted dismissal of the woman. Because of an employment security contract, after her position became redundant, she had one year to find alternative employment within the company. She worked in various departments. "Everywhere she went, they loved her. They wanted to keep her. ... The CEO would say openly, 'If any of you, at this table, take this woman in your area, and think you are going to be permanent, I'll have a long, hard look at you too'" (1993).

Eventually the CEO was willing to terminate the woman and provide her with an acceptable severance package. The woman left the organization believing that it was a marvellous company that had "changed her life, and had helped her child" (1993) which she supported single-handedly.

The HR manager was happy with the outcome. "She (the employee) got what she needed. He got what he needed, but not in the way he wanted to get it. I was able to be fair to the woman, who I felt we were unfair to, but I was able to be fair with her. I was able to give her enough notice that she could get on with her life. ... Had we moved on it a couple of months earlier we could have given her more money, which maybe would have been more meaningful to her, to have a bigger chunk of money" (1993).

When asked if she would make the same decision if she had to do it again, the HR manager said, "Yes. I would have liked to have gotten her a little more money and got her out sooner. I would have made the same decision. I still would have stood for her. Still would have been tough... I don't think we made her suffer unduly by it" (1993).

How the ethical decision making process was used by F2 to resolve the dilemma of the unfair termination of an employee is shown in Table 5.

Access to information

A personal conflict of interest was a serious and difficult dilemma for a HR manager who wanted to change his career. The two goods in conflict were positioning himself for another, more challenging job in the company, or staying in his current job, protecting his personal integrity and image in a company that had a long memory.

He had been working in human resources for many years, and for all those years, he was with the same company. "I never expected to work for HR for so many years, let alone for the same company... Once you've been on the job for so long you're in there and it's tough to break out" (M1, 1993). Promotion within the department was only a faint

Table 5

The Ten-Step Ethical Decision Making Model Applied to F2's Dilemma of Unfair Termination of an Employee

Steps	Actions
Awareness	The HR manager is asked by the CEO to terminate the employment of a woman who had been gossiping about the CEO.
Gather Information	The HR manager goes to the corporate lawyer to ascertain what needs to be done to release the woman from the company.
Review Values	When the CEO refuses to provide an adequate severance package, the HR manager reviews what the lawyer has told her is acceptable, and reviews her beliefs that the company should avoid litigation whenever possible, and employees should be dealt with fairly and honestly.
Compare Values to Situation	An employee is to be terminated from her position without a severance package. The corporate lawyer has advised that the woman be given a severance package. The HR manager believes the woman should be treated fairly, and that the company should not place itself in a position where it may have to go to court.
Evaluate Compatibility	Terminating the employee without a severance package is incompatible with the advice of the corporate lawyer, and with the HR manager's values.
Conclusion	Decide that there is a problem.
Choose Action	The HR manager does not terminate the employee.
Review Action	The employee remains employed. The CEO will be angry and difficult. The HR manager will suffer the wrath of the CEO.

Table 5 continued

Steps	Actions
Decide How Action Will Be Managed	By following corporate policies and procedures the employee will remain with the company. The HR manager will negotiate with the employee to establish a fair severance package. The HR manager will not allow the employee to be terminated without a fair severance package, no matter what the CEO commands.
Implement Action	The HR manager ensures that the employees is dealt with fairly, honestly, and in accordance to corporate policies and procedures. The employee is eventually terminated with a reasonable severance package.

possibility as a younger colleague had recently been promoted over him to be his supervisor.

In his position, he had access to information about positions that were going to competition. Some of these were "being considered months or even years" (1993) before other people were even vaguely aware of their existence. He struggled with the information, whether to use it "for the best interest of the organization, or whether to use it for my own good" (1993).

He chose to tell his supervisor of his conflict, deciding that it was better to be open about his intentions. His priority was to "try to help the organization do what is right. And then, if the choice is made that, okay, we're going ahead with this job... At that point, I would then describe a conflict of interest and apply for it, and get my manager to deal with the competition. So I've tried to stay out of it, to minimize my influence on the choice making process up to the point where the choice is made... That's the best I can do.... I would have the opportunity to affect, or to manipulate, the conclusions in a way that would be self-serving" (1993).

As a result, he was able to focus his activities, plans, and objectives towards achieving his goal. He could maintain his integrity without jeopardizing his chances of changing his career within the company. He also felt that being open was important. "At least my boss knows what I'm doing, and what I'm thinking, whether she agrees or disagrees. I don't know how she feels about it and she's not inflicted her values on me. So I have resolved it

(the dilemma) to the best that I can at this point by just letting people understand that I have a dilemma, and that is what I'm trying to do here, to work it through" (1993).

He was not satisfied with the short-term results of his decision. "I'm not real happy with it. I'd be a lot happier to sort of do some pushing and shoving because I know how to do that, and, I think, I could probably be in a different job. If I'd gone a different path, I think I'd probably be in a different job now" (1993). From a long-term view, he was satisfied. "I'm doing exactly the right thing because I'm being honest and I can live with whatever the results are, and I'm just trying to be myself... I was glad that I was able to make my own decision, but it would have been nice to get a little more feedback on whether other people, specifically my boss, thought that that was the right way to do things" (1993).

How the ethical decision making process was used by M1 to resolve the dilemma over access to information is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

The Ten-Step Ethical Decision Making Model Applied to M1's Dilemma Over Access to Information

Steps	Actions
Awareness	During 17 years in the same position, the desire for a change in career grew. As the desire became more intense the HR manager became aware that there could be a problem. When a colleague was promoted to be his supervisor, the awareness became acute.
Review Values	The HR manager questioned his integrity. The company has a long memory and will judge an individual based on past performance. Indiscretions are not forgotten.
Compare Values to Situation	The HR manager was working with information he could use to obtain a better position in the company. He did not want to compromise his integrity.
Evaluate Compatibility	The desire to maintain integrity was incompatible with using confidential information to advance his career.
Conclusion	Decide that there is a problem.

Table 6 continued

Steps	Actions
Gather Information	The HR manager reviewed past experiences with the company and realized that if he was seen as being indiscreet it would be held against him for a very long time.
Choose Action	The HR manager will discuss the situation with his supervisor.
Review Action	If there is a potential conflict of interest, the HR manager will review the situation, decide if he would like the job, and discuss the circumstance with his supervisor. He will maintain his integrity and the best interests of the company will be served.
Decide How Action Will Be Managed	When a conflict of interest is identified the supervisor will be asked to manage the situation. The HR managers will be free to apply for the position.
Implement Action	The HR manager will watch for positions he would like; discuss the situation with his supervisor; have the supervisor manage the competition; and apply for the position.

Performance management

M2 chose to discuss performance management problems in general terms, because this area represents a re-occurring problem that caused him a great deal of concern. The goods that are in conflict are doing the best for the employee, or doing the best for the company.

Performance problems will be brought to the attention of the HR manager by the manager of an employee. The manager will have gathered data and documented the performance problem before bringing the problem to the HR manager. At this point, M2 explained, it is possible to avoid a major dilemma by checking that the manager's view coincides with the events. Sometimes, "you realize that maybe the manager's view of the situation is slightly different than the actual situation. It may still be a performance problem, but maybe not to the degree to what the manager has indicated" (M2, 1993). Once the HR manager ensures that the documentation of the case is acceptable, the corrective action process begins. This is a serious process. "As soon as you start it, there's the

potential that somebody could get fired, and somebody's career is going to be chopped off at the knees" (1993).

The corrective action process for M2's employer begins with a verbal warning, explaining to the employee that the performance problem must be resolved, or further corrective action will be taken. The next step is a written warning. Thereafter, if the problem is not resolved, the employee is placed on probation. Before probation "the whole situation has to be reviewed by our corporate lawyer and my boss, who has the authorization over all terminations for Canada. They have to go through a chronology of the events and give their blessing to continue. Then, once the person is on probation, if it's felt that they're (the employee) not going to make it... then we can cut them loose" (1993).

"What you always wrestle with, is when you get to that point where the decision is being made; is this person going to make it, or are we going to fire them?" (1993) For M2, some of the situations are clear and there is no problem with proceeding, but other cases can cause a great deal of concern.

> Have we been as fair as possible? Have we given the employee every opportunity to succeed? Are we being too quick and they really haven't had the opportunity ... and we're being very, very unfair?... The dilemma that really comes up is one of being fair versus maybe being too fair... If they've done an okay job for the organization for a number of years, you really feel an obligation on that part, yet how long do you hang on before it becomes abundantly obvious that the person is not going to make it. Where is the line that says by making this cut now, we're actually doing somebody a favour as opposed to putting them through the agony of continued corrective action... You really wonder if you've been as fair as possible in every situation. (1993)

When managing performance problems, M2 reviews the organization's basic values, and determines whether the employees have been dealt respectfully and honestly. "Where do we make the cutoff to ensure that we help that person to maintain some self-respect and don't kick a bruised and beaten body out of the organization?... You're balancing respect for the individual versus the business objectives." In "most" situations the employee will resign before being terminated. M2 said that having an employee resign allowed that person to maintain dignity, whereas taking corrective action to the point where the employee is asked to leave could be damaging to the person.

The intent of the process is to improve employee performance, and in some cases they "have turned the situation around and gone on to be above average, and in some cases stellar performers. There are a number of situations where we've had very, very good success and those are the ones that make you feel really good" (1993). The company does not track employees who have resigned or have been terminated, but M2 speculated that, "if we talk to the people afterwards, they will probably admit that we did the right thing."

M2 was asked if he was satisfied with the resolution of performance issues which were taken through the corrective action process. "Probably in about 50 percent of the situations I felt satisfied with the way things have gone, and about 50 percent I haven't. The ones that I have, have been the ones that you end up seeing a positive result. I mean, it's been the absolute right decision. The person has realized it, once they've left, they realize that it's the best for them.

The other ones that bother me, are the ones that you look back on and realize that the process that we have was not followed well... You look back on it and you know it just could have been handled that much better right from the beginning" (1993).

M2 indicated that there were plans to change the corrective action process. The intention was to provide the line managers with better support after every performance management situation. When an employee has improved or overcome a problem, the situation is reviewed. It provides "an opportunity to re-examine the process and learn what went right." When an employee leaves the company,

> we've thought of putting together a tribunal, where the manager, and their manager, would basically debrief my manager, who's the vice president of human resources for the company; or debrief him (vice president of HR), our company president and our corporate lawyer... For the ones that went well, it's not going to be a problem, but for the ones that the managers have clearly messed up the process, it's really going to hit home to the managers that they are totally accountable for the corrective action process and that they'd better be doing it right. (1993)

M2 was aware that a tribunal may encourage managers to avoid pursuing any corrective action. At the time of M2's interview, the tribunal had not been implemented. Instead, the company chose to increase the training managers received on performance problems, with an emphasis on the skills used during the corrective action process. "We've looked at a number of different ways that we can try to improve the process" (1993).

How the ethical decision making process was used by M2 to resolve the dilemmas associated with the management of performance problems is shown in Table 7.

Through the course of the interviews and the focus group, other dilemmas were cited. Not all of the dilemmas were specific to human resource managers. The dilemmas which were discussed are summarized in appendix E.

Teaching Human Resource Management Ethics

When the focus group discussed whether ethics could be taught, there were six statements that were definitely no, four were yes, and 22 discussed various aspects of how ethics should be taught, and what should be taught. Regardless of their stand, all of the participants had suggestions for teaching ethics. The consensus was that it is not possible to

Table 7

The Ten-Step Ethical Decision Making Model Applied to M2's Dilemma with Performance Management Problems

Steps	Actions
Awareness	The HR manager becomes aware when a performance problem is brought to his attention by a line manager.
Review Values	The HR manager will review the values of the company.
Compare Values to Situation	The HR manager will compare the company values to the documentation supplied by the line manager.
Evaluate Compatibility	If the documentation is suspect, there is a possibility that company values could be compromised.
Conclusion	Decide that there is a problem.
Gather Information	The HR manager will review the documentation and verify that it agrees with the actual events. If there are any discrepancies, the HR manager will discuss the situation with the line manager.
Choose Action	Based on the information gathered, the HR manager will choose an action. If there is a valid performance problem that needs corrective action, the HR manager will begin the process.
Review Action	If corrective active is to begin, the HR manager will consider the possible impact the process will have on the employee.
Decide How Action Will Be Managed	Within the guidelines established by the company, the HR manger follow the steps in the corrective action process
Implement Action	The HR manager will begin the corrective action process.

teach a person to have a conscience. "They've either got a conscience or they don't... Maybe you could give them another perspective on it, but you can't teach conscience, and I think that's what ethics is" (F1, 1994). What can be taught is the decision making process, management processes, how to identify corporate values, and the complexity of ethics, business, and human resources.

"If I had a chance to go back to school, and learn about what it was going to be like (working in human resources), that would be what I would want to know, what does it look like when I'm in there. I sort of know what I would do, but I don't quite understand why nobody else would want to do that" (M2, 1994). The tools which were seen as being most useful for developing a sense of what it would be like working in human resources are those that use anecdotal information such as case studies, role plays, and lectures, or discussions with human resource practitioners. These tools encourage students to see that there are perspectives other than their own, and that most situations come in shades of gray, not black and white.

> The most effective would be the case study type of process, and here's the situation, as a group, within the class, talk about it, decide how you would handle it. And then what you do is have an HR expert, I shouldn't say expert, HR people who have experienced that, and here's the decision that was actually made and the reasons why it was made, and people can learn from that. The case study process has no right and wrong, but it's what was the best decision based on the situation. It is a great way of learning, because you make a decision or you come to a conclusion, and then you can find out what somebody else in a position of authority made... You have an understanding of how the decision was made and maybe it does influence you when you come to being faced with a similar decision in the future. (F1, 1994)

A human resource management program would also encourage students to develop contacts in the human resource community. These people would be able to share insights into the daily operations of an HR department, and supply a clear understanding of the work being done.

> They've (human resource practitioners) gone through all of these feelings, they've gone through the thought process, they've made decisions that they're having to live with. Phone other people and get good quality advice (from) other professionals, including other HR professionals... That's something that students of HR do not intuitively understand, they expect that they are going to have to be so smart and make all these decisions. Mostly you just have to be able to dial the numbers on the telephone and you're probably going to be okay. (M2 , 1994)

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Reflections

Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth,
See motley life in modern trappings dressed,
And feed with varied fools the eternal jest:

"The Vanity of Human Wishes"
Samuel Johnson

Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis contains the summary, conclusions, recommendations and reflections based on the study findings. The first section summarizes the research study; the second section discusses the conclusions derived from the study; the third section proposes recommendations for further research, and the final section presents reflections on the research process.

Summary

The major purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the processes used by human resource managers to resolve ethical dilemmas encountered during the execution of their duties.

This study sought to identify, from its research data, events which present human resource managers with ethical dilemmas, ethical principles used to guide their decisions, and specific ethical dilemmas that the sample population had faced.

The study was guided in part by the individual interviews of four subjects, and by a focus group that brought the four subjects together. During the individual interviews, the subjects were asked to provide information on their experience in human resource management, their current job functions, and their personal ethics and values affecting ethical decisions. They were also asked to recount a personal human resource management dilemma, describe the company for which they worked, and define the ethics and values of their employer. The focus group discussed factors that influence ethical decisions, suggested a process for making ethical decisions, and debated whether it was possible to teach ethical decision making to human resources students.

The research population was chosen from nominations made by the executive members of the Human Resources Management Association of Edmonton (HRMAE) and the Human Resources Institute of Alberta (HRIA) for the Grant MacEwan Community College DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) which would be used to develop human resource management courses.

Data were interpreted using grounded theory procedures and techniques. To assist with coding data, the software program ATLAS/ti (Archiv fur Technik, Lebenswelt und Alltagssprache, Technical University of Berlin) was used. The core category identified was "process for making ethical decisions". A story line was used to arrange all other categories in a clear and logical fashion. The ordering of categories allowed a statement about the resulting relationships to be written. The statement described the environment in which ethical decisions were made, the elements affecting ethical decisions, the process for making ethical decisions, the application of the process to ethical dilemmas, and the teaching of ethics to human resource management students. With the support of the statement, the categories were integrated to form a model for an ethical decision making process.

Conclusions

In the course of their work, the following events presented human resource managers with ethical dilemmas.

1. Complaints of sexual harassment, where the complainant will not allow any action to be taken.

2. The use of short term disability leave by an employee who does not appear either physically or mentally distressed.

3. Performance problems that lead to corrective action and the termination of an employee's position with the company.

4. Hiring practices that discriminate against a specific gender.

5. Managers who have not followed guidelines, policies or procedures and have compromised the company's values and ethics.

6. Seasonal recruiting that must choose between seasonal employees who have served the company for 5 to 10 years, or providing the children of employees with summer employment, or allowing permanent employees temporary experience in positions that could lead to career advancement.

7. Using confidential information for personal gain.

8. Managing change within an organization that conflicts with the organization's traditional values and operations.

9. Terminating an employee without just cause and refusing to provide a fair severance package.

10. The unintentional violation of company policy.

These dilemmas developed out of the primary job functions of the HR managers and illustrate some of the most pervasive ethical issues in the field, as identified by Patricia McLagan. When a sexually harassed employee does not want the perpetrator confronted, the ethical issue is maintaining confidentiality. Questioning the need for an apparently healthy

employee to take stress leave raises the issue of personal bias. Performance problems and managing change focus on being sensitive to the effects of intervention and addressing the consequences of the intervention. Hiring practices that discriminate against a specific group evoke the issue of respect for population differences. Managers who compromise corporate ethics have HR managers examining the issue of truth in claims, data, and recommendations. Recruiting seasonal staff and the unintentional violation of policy raise the issue of balancing company and individual needs and interests. Questioning the use of confidential information for personal gain raises the issue of avoiding a conflict of interest. Refusing to terminate an employee without just cause led an HR manager to refuse an inappropriate request.

To resolve ethical dilemmas, HR managers engage in a decision making process. This study identified ten steps in the process:

1. awareness of potential problem
2. review values affected by situation
3. compare values to situation
4. evaluate compatibility of values to the situation
5. decide if a problem exists
6. gather information
7. conclusion
8. review action for consequences
9. decide how action will be managed
10. implement action

The study found that the process relies on the HR manager's experience as a human resources professional, and is guided by personal beliefs, values and ethics, as well as the HR manager's knowledge of the employer's corporate ethics, guidelines, policies, and procedures. The ethics of the HR manager and the company should be compatible. If there is significant incompatibility between corporate and personal ethics, the HR manager can experience cognitive dissonance trying to reconcile dissimilar beliefs.

Throughout the ethical decision making process, the HR manager should remain objective. If the review of values, comparison of values to the situation, and evaluation of compatibility are done objectively, then a rational decision can be reached. Objectivity during the gathering of information should not favour any of the participants, but will allow the HR manager to view the situation from many perspectives and choose a fair and equitable action. While gathering information, the HR manager needs to be sensitive to any falsiloquium that will effect a sound decision. When choosing, reviewing, and planning an action, HR managers must remember that they are seen by their organizations as exemplars of ethical behaviour and their actions will be scrutinized.

The study found that HR managers do not make ethical decisions in isolation. Some ethical decisions are determined by committees. The HR manager may sit on the committee, or feed thoughts, perspectives and ideas to the group through a committee member. Some ethical decisions are made by guiding clients, such as line managers, through the process. Other ethical decisions are made by consulting colleagues in the human resources community.

During the study, the HR managers spoke at length about the legal implications of their ethical decisions. This suggests that HR managers could use information on legal processes and legislation that affect human resources.

Recommendations

Corporate

It is recommended that corporate ethics be evident when the company is recruiting human resource staff. An overview of the company's ethical standards and expectations can be included in job postings and advertisements. Interviews provide an opportunity to discuss and compare corporate ethics and the candidate's ethics to determine compatibility. As part of a successful candidate's introduction to the company, there should be a formal orientation to any guidelines, policies, procedures, mandate and code of ethics. The new human resource employee should have no doubts as to what the corporation considers ethical behaviour and what the consequences of unethical performance will be.

Organizations are advised to clearly define, publish and support their ethical principles. Policies and procedures should establish the rights and wrongs of specific situations, and give clear direction to employees as to what must be done. Guidelines should set parameters in which employees and their managers can work and negotiate when resolving ethical situations. Seminars on ethical behaviour and corporate ethics and values will focus attention on what the company believes to be acceptable behaviour from its employees. Employees should be encouraged to discuss ethical concerns with colleagues and management to clarify appropriate actions and avoid ethical dilemmas. Management will need to lead by example, modelling behaviour that reflects the organization's ethical values.

Human Resource Management Practitioners

HR managers are advised to understand the ethical principles and expectations of their employers, and model the appropriate behaviour. It is also suggested that they participate in professional development activities that focus on ethical issues, either at work, through a human resources association, or through programs offered by educational institutions in the community.

Human Resources Associations

Associations such as HRIA and HRMAE are advised to publish a code of conduct or a statement of ethics for their members. This code or statement should be open to the membership for examination, discussion and periodic review to ensure that it is valid. It should be revised as needed to reflect changes in the profession. Associations can also provide a valuable forum for seminars, workshops and discussions about ethics and current ethical problems of the profession.

Teaching Human Resource Management Ethics

It is recommended that institutions offering programs in human resources look to the HR and corporate communities for program support. These linkages will make it possible to work cooperatively to develop programs which will address the needs of HR students and the community in which they intend to use their new or enhanced skills.

An institution's connection to the HR community can also be a rich learning resource. Content experts and HR practitioners should be invited into the classroom as lecturers to discuss current ethical problems and solutions with students.

In the institution, ethics education should be integrated into the curriculum, to emphasize that many aspects of human resource management have an ethical dimension. If the study of ethics becomes a separate course, there is the risk that it will be seen as artificial, or as a means to an end. By using program content to generate ethical questions and situations, ethics become a natural and relevant part of the curriculum.

Further Study

This has been an exploratory work which has yielded a model of the process human resource managers use when making ethical decisions. Reasons for further study in this direction would be to revise, refine or possibly reject steps in the process. A second phase of research would require a more reliable and valid assessment method. This would require a test for the evaluation or interpretation of any experimental process.

Researchers who wish to conduct a similar study should use a larger sample of human resource managers from a more diverse group of companies. The researcher should also consider conducting the study on a broader basis, such as provincial or national to ascertain if there are cultural differences in human resource communities, and if these affect the ethical decision making process.

Another area for research is the examination of moral development in human resource managers and the possible correlation to job satisfaction and performance. Also there is material for study in examining the levels of stress created when making ethical decisions, and whether these levels increase with the amount of personal commitment a human resource manager has to a decision.

Reflections

These reflections are for students and researchers considering a grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis. It is an exciting and interesting method for examining behaviour in a natural setting. It is also a method that will challenge a researcher's theoretical and social sensitivity.

During the study the researcher wrestled with two major dilemmas. One dilemma concerned the subjects. Through the process of contacting the participants, arranging for interviews, the interviews, the organization of the focus group, and the focus group session, an affable relationship developed with the subjects. This caused the researcher to question whether it was possible to remain objective. There was a desire to portray the participants in the best light possible. When examining situations and quotations it was necessary to ask if the choice best illustrated a point, or if a safer choice was being made to protect the subjects.

The second dilemma came during the coding of the data. It was a creative process that seemed arbitrary, influenced by factors such as the reading of related literature and the researcher's health and attitudes. There was a concern that a different day would produce different results. It was important to clearly define each code and review the definitions each time text was coded, or when there was any doubt about the meaning and application of a code.

The dilemmas suggest the procedures and techniques were vulnerable to complex influences and inconsistencies. These complexities need to be accepted to gain greater depth and breadth in the data.

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Appendix A

Participants' Introductory Package

In this appendix can be found a copy of the introductory package which was given to potential study participants. It outlines the purpose of the study, and the expectations of the participants. A copy of the covering letter is also included.

Ingrid Stammer
4, 10750 - 84 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 2H9

October 4, 1993

Dear :

Thank you for offering to participate in this study on ethical decision making by human resource management practitioners. Enclosed is an information package which will give a brief background on the study, explain its significance and describe what a participant can expect once he becomes involved in the study.

If after reading this information package you still wish to participate, there is a brief letter of consent for the you to sign at the end of the package. Once the consent form has been signed and returned to me, we can arrange a time and location for the first interview

When you have decided, or if you have any questions please call me at 432-0079. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Stammer

Research Into Ethical Decision Making

Background

This study grew out of the Grant MacEwan Community College (GMCC) study of human resource management practitioner's competencies. The GMCC study was a result of a needs assessment survey conducted by the college, which indicated that there was a need for human resource management training at all levels, the decision was made to conduct a curriculum development. The DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) process was chosen to gather data.

The DACUM workshops used participants nominated by their human resource management peers. The first workshop, DACUM 1, developed a profile of the bodies of knowledge and categories represented in the human resource management profession, and identified general management competencies. Participants identified eleven major components. DACUM 2A and 2B used these bodies of knowledge and categories to generate, segregate and prioritize competencies. The two workshops combined to produce the final profile which consisted of 11 categories and a total of 220 competencies. The profile was sent to the 380 members of the Human Resources Management Association of Edmonton (HRMAE) for validation. An additional DACUM, 2C, was convened to further define management competencies. The profile from this workshop consisted of 7 categories and 77 competencies. This profile was sent to 38 managers for validation.

For validation, competencies in both profiles were to be rated: 1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = considerably important, 4 = extremely important, and U = unable to judge. Respondents were to determine which statement best described how important the competency was for them to successfully carry out their responsibilities.

In the management profile, under the category "Exhibit Personal Competence", was the competency: "Practice ethical behaviour: maintain confidentiality, demonstrate integrity, demonstrate honesty." Of all the competencies rated in both profiles, this received the highest ranking, 3.9. Of the 38 management surveys completed, 36 rated the competency as extremely important (4).

Research Objective

You have been asked to participate in an exploratory study which will examine the processes used by human resource management practitioners to resolve ethical dilemmas encountered during the execution of their duties.

Significance of the Study

This study has both practical and theoretical significance. The results of the study should be of interest to institutions offering human resource management courses,

instructors delivering human resource management courses, people working as human resource practitioners, individuals concerned with human resource management issues, and those who have responsibility to provide direction and leadership to human resource management programs.

In terms of practical value, this study may have significance in providing insights for those whose interests and/or direct involvement may be that of practitioners, and policy makers committed to institutional human resource management program implementation. In addition, the study will help practitioners requiring immediate application in the classroom setting and a general theory base for future course delivery.

The results of the study may have significance in providing human resource management instructors information which can be incorporated into courses taught for the success of individuals in the human resource management field.

Participation

As a participant, you can expect to spend between ten to twelve hours on the study. You will be participating in an interview, a review of the interview transcript, a focus group, and a review of the focus group transcript.

At the first interview you will be asked about your current position, employer, and how ethics affect you and the organization. You will also be asked to describe and examine the most serious ethical dilemma you have encountered as a human resource management practitioner. You will be asked to review and verify a transcript of the interview, after which you will be able to make changes, add or delete information, and discuss any concerns or questions.

As a focus group, the four participants will meet to discuss ethical concerns, and define a process for resolving ethical dilemmas. Each participant will be asked to review and verify a transcript of the focus group, after which you will be able to make changes, and discuss any concerns or questions.

Data will be collected from the interviews and focus group transcripts using grounded theory procedures. Any conclusions, suggestions and/or theory will emerge from the data of this study, and will be limited by the situational context of the study.

Ethical concerns and safeguards

Before consenting to participate in the study, it is important that you believe you are entering into a clear and fair agreement, and that you have had a thorough explanation of the proposed research and the process in which you will be participating. Remember that participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw from the study at any time and any related data will be destroyed.

Throughout the process you will be kept informed about the progress of the study. If any questions or concerns arise, please feel free to contact me, Ingrid Stammer, at 432-0079.

To protect your privacy, a pseudonym will be assigned, and any references to employers or work specific information that is essential to the study will be reported in broad terms or categories. Even though every attempt will be made to maintain anonymity, it is important to understand that the study is based on a very narrow population and there is a chance that an individual may be recognized or deduced from situations or information presented in the final report. If you are uncomfortable with this, please reconsider your participation.

The researcher will be the only person with access to all transcripts and tapes of the interviews and focus group. During the study, sensitive material will be kept secured at her home. At the end of the study the material will be destroyed.

Neither your associates or any organization of which you may be a member will have access to any of the interviews or related materials. Interested parties will have access to the final report in which you will not be specifically identified and every attempt will be made to preserve anonymity.

The study is not sponsored and cannot offer monetary compensation for your participation.

One month after the thesis is bound, all interview and focus group transcripts, tapes and related materials will be destroyed.

Appendix B

Consent Form

In this appendix can be found a copy of the consent form which will be given to participants selected as the research population.

Consent Form

Thesis Title: Making Ethical Decisions

Researcher: Ingrid Stammer
University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Adult, Career and Technology Education

This is to certify that I agree to participate in the above research study. Having been contacted by the researcher, a graduate student in the Department of Adult, Career and Technology, I understand that:

1. The purpose of this study is to examine the processes used by human resource management practitioners to resolve ethical dilemmas encountered during the execution of their duties.

2. My name will not be disclosed at any time during this study or used in the resulting thesis.

3. Any information I provide to the researcher will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this study.

4. I am participating in this study on a voluntary basis. Therefore, I have a right to quit or refuse to participate at any time.

5. If I choose to leave the study, any materials related to my contribution will be destroyed and will not be included in the thesis.

6. The results of the study will be made available to me if I so request.

7. I have been fully informed as to the nature of the study and my involvement in it.

8. The thesis this study leads to will be available for examination at the University of Alberta Library.

Signature of participant: Date:

Appendix C

Questions for Individual Interviews

In this appendix can be found the questions developed to guide the individual interviews.

How many years have you been in Human Resources?

How long have you been in management?

Do you like your job?

How would you describe your organization?

Do you participate in setting the guidelines?

How would you describe your job?

What do you like best about your job?

What do you like least about your work?

What kinds of pressures do you feel on the job?

When you think about your values - the things that matter to you - which of those are important to you to find in an organization?

What are the explicit values of the organization? Things you might have in your mandate.

What are the implicit values in the organization?

When you think of ethics what does it mean to you?

Are you always aware of ethics?

Do ethics come up in specific situations?

When the topic of ethics comes up in your organization, in what way does it usually come up?

What do you consider the most serious ethical dilemma that you've encountered?

As you worked through this dilemma, what kind of questions and concerns did you raise, or were raised for you?

Do you feel satisfied with the decision that you made?

Do you feel comfortable with the way you handled your decision?

Would you make the same decisions if you had it to do over again?

Is there anything at all that you would have done differently?

What kind of dilemmas are you facing now?

What kinds of things are influencing your decisions around this?

How does the organization affect your ethical decisions?

Appendix D

Questions for Focus Group

In this appendix can be found the questions developed to guide the focus group.

What factors affect ethical decision making?
What circumstances, facts, influences contribute to ethical decision making?

Can you suggest a process for making ethical decisions?
Suggest a course of action, or series of steps.

Can ethical decision making be taught?
Could an effective course be developed?

Appendix E

Dilemmas

In this appendix can be found a summary of the dilemmas discussed in the individual interviews and the focus group. Each scenario is accompanied by questions that are intended to generate discussion about ethical decision making.

Unfair Hiring Practices

Your company would like to fill a middle management position. You will be managing the process which will include advertising, reviewing resumes, selecting candidates for interviews and negotiating the employee's pay and benefits package. There are over 200 applications for the position. As you begin to review the applications, a message from the executive committee is sent telling you not to include any female candidates.

How do you react to the message?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
Does knowing that the management team will be changing in the near future make a difference to your actions?
Does the fact that you enjoy your work make a difference to your actions?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What would you do?
How would you implement your decision?

Unfair Termination

A flamboyant but competent and hard working employee is indiscreet with gossip about the CEO. He is made aware of her indiscretion and wants her terminated. You refuse on the grounds that it is an unfair dismissal, and unless the employee is dealt with fairly and paid a reasonable settlement, she will remain with the organization. The CEO is stubborn, and develops a personal vendetta against the employee. Not only does he disband her department but he makes your job very uncomfortable. The woman is shuffled from department to department. She receives glowing compliments from her supervisors. If any of the supervisors make moves to hire her in a permanent position, the CEO lets them know that it is not a wise career move. The battle continues until the CEO finally tells you to pay out the woman.

The woman receives what she considers a more than fair settlement. She is involved with the community, and as she goes from one activity to another, she praises the company. The people she comes in contact with are told that it is a wonderful company with wonderful people.

In the aftermath, it is clear that your stand has taken its toll. You no longer report directly to the CEO.

Which "goods" are in conflict?

Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
Is maintaining your ethics worth the wrath of a CEO?
What would you have done?
How would you implement your decision?

Performance Management

A manager comes to you to discuss an employee's performance problem. The manager has gathered the appropriate data and is able to present a convincing argument. From what the manager says, it appears that it is necessary to start a corrective action process. You begin to work with the manager to prepare the proper documentation and to encourage the employee to correct his behaviour. You realize there is a possibility that the employee may have to be terminated, which will also mean the end of his career.

The further you go with the process the clearer it is that the manager has neglected to tell you significant information related to the situation. There is still a performance problem, but not to the degree that the manager indicated. The performance problem still needs to be addressed, but could have been rectified without having to start the corrective action process.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
Where do you go from here?
What do you do with the manager?
What do you do with the employee?
What do you do with the documentation gathered to support the corrective action process?
How would you implement your decision?

Personal Gain

You are a human resource manager who wants to change careers. You like the company that you are working for and would prefer to continue working for the organization. Over the past few years, you have been struggling with information concerning openings in the company. You don't know whether to use the information for the best interest of the company, or to use it for your own purposes. You often discover that other positions are being developed, or are being considered, months or years before anyone else is even vaguely aware of the possibilities. This knowledge would allow you to promote yourself, or establish yourself with the vice presidents or general managers who will be hiring, as the best candidate for the position.

There have been several positions of real interest to you. Some would have meant a lateral transfer into an operational area. Other positions have included several district managers, which would be a promotion. You can see yourself doing well in any of these new career paths.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
Is it unethical to use the information for personal gain, even if you are the best candidate for a position?
Who would you tell about your desire for a career change?
How would you proceed?
How would you implement your decision?

Additional Human Resource Dilemmas

Sexual Harassment

An employee comes to you and says, "I don't want you to do anything about it, but I feel that I'm being sexually harassed and I just want you to know about it." After listening to the employee, it is clear that they have a legitimate complaint. You believe there is an obligation to do something about the situation. You try to convince the person to allow you to share the information so that the situation can be rectified, but they absolutely refuse.

You realize that if the situation is not dealt with, somebody else could be harassed, then another employee, and maybe another. There is a potential threat to other employees. There is a concern that the company could be held legally responsible, because it was aware of the situation and did not address the problem.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What do you do with the information?
What should be done for the person who has been harassed?
Should the harasser be approached or kept under observation?
How would you implement your decision?
How would you begin to develop policies and procedures concerning sexual harassment?

Sick Leave

There is a progression in your sick leave policy. The first four days employees are absent, they are using general sick days. Once they have missed five consecutive days, they are on short term disability up to 15 weeks.

An employee has come back from her doctor and said, "I'm under stress and my doctor says that I should take three months off." From observing her work, and that of other staff who have taken stress leave, you believe her claim may not be valid.

She takes her leave. While she is gone, other staff come to you and say, "This stinks. This person is not under stress, yet she is off because of stress."

You are in a position where you must decide if the claim is legitimate, and if it is not, what you should do. You also have people concerned that other employees are abusing the system. This discontent is affecting morale. "We would all like to take two months off at full pay, and then be able to come back to work, and still have holidays."

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
How can you approach the employee without appearing to question her loyalty or honesty?
How do you resolve the discontent of the other employees?
Does the policy need to be revised?
What would you do?
How would you implement your decision?

Terminating Employees

You have a good and loyal employee who is struggling. There is a performance issue that needs to be addressed. The employee is being given every opportunity to succeed, but nothing seems to help the performance problem. You feel that the employee is being rewarded for past performance. The employee knows that he is not performing up to company standards, and is beginning to develop further problems related to low self-esteem. You must decide when to terminate the employee and the circumstances under which the employee will be released.

What would you do?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
How would you deal with the employee?
Would you give the employee the opportunity to resign?

How do you balance respect for the individual with the company's business objectives?
How would you implement your decision?

Seasonal Employees

Your company has 300 seasonal positions that are available every spring. Most of the seasonal employees have been working for 5 to 10 years. These employees wait for their supervisors to call to tell them when their positions are open. Very few new workers are hired for the seasonal positions.

The company has decided to offer some of these seasonal positions to the sons and daughters of full-time employees. You have 45 candidates from the sons and daughters who qualify for positions. You need to decide if you will hire all 45 candidates, or remain loyal to the seasonal employees and only use as many of the 45 as needed to fill the few vacant positions.

The union wants the seasonal positions to be posted internally so that permanent employees have an opportunity to gain experience that could lead to advancement within the organization. Their regular positions could be back filled while they try a new position.

You have three different groups that want access to the same jobs. You cannot make everybody happy.

What do you do?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
How do you manage the seasonal employees?
How do you manage the children of full-time employees?
How do you manage the union?
How do you manage full-time employees who want to test a new position?
How would you implement your decision?

Litigation

You have a choice to either pay out an employee or face a lawsuit. You have treated the person fairly. At an executive meeting, the situation is discussed. Everybody at the table agrees that the court's decision would probably favour the company. If you go to court it could be three years before the suit is settled. The executive committee agrees unanimously to pay the person and get on with business. By paying the employee, he will leave the company within the month and save the company time, resources and aggravation. You agree with the decision, but do not feel that it is a fair solution. In your opinion, the undeserving will gain financially.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What can you do to resolve your inner conflict?
Did the committee make the right decision?
What would you do differently?
How would you implement your decision?

Nepotism

You work for a large public corporation. It has a strong nepotism policy that does not allow the hiring of family members. Most of the people in the organization disagree with the policy. On several occasions, you have been pressured to make a special deal and give special favours that would have gone against the policy. To date, you have never knowingly violated the policy.

You have just discovered that you unintentionally facilitated the hiring of an employee's daughter. She was the best candidate for the position and is doing admirable work, is a good team player and is well liked by her co-workers. You do not believe that anybody will ever notice.

What do you do next?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
Do you take it to your manager/supervisor?
How would you implement your decision?

Executive Parking

The managers in the organization are given free parking spaces, while the employees are charged $45.00 a month for parking. Staff see this as inequitable and have openly questioned the policy. You feel it is a trivial issue that has consumed too much time. At a recent staff meeting, the situation was aggravated when a manager said that the managers deserved free parking.

The executive have asked you to suggest a way to resolve the situation.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What would you suggest?
How would you carry out your solution?

Deductions

A company president, in charge of the company audit, has found a .17 cent discrepancy on an employee's cheque. He insists on discovering how the loss occurred. You have been asked to assist him. There are a great number of forms and ledgers to be reviewed. When you question the need for all the time and effort to find a mere .17 cents, the president says, "The employee worked for that .17 cents. The company owes her .17 cents. It is her money." The employee did not know that she had lost .17 cents.

If you were company president, would you have searched for the problem?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
How would you implement your decision?

Other Dilemmas

Golf

At the Kemper Open Golf Tournament, Tom Kite warned his playing partner that he was about to commit a rule infraction that would cost him two strokes. The playing partner corrected his behaviour to avoid the two stroke penalty. He went on to win the tournament, beating Tom Kite by one stroke. By coming in second, Kite lost $94,000 in prize money, but gained great respect.

Is respect worth $94,000?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
Would you do the same as Kite if you knew it might cost you a victory?
Would you do the same as Kite if you knew that your playing partner could never win the tournament?

Lost Contract

Your company is not expected to make the short list for a major contract. A competitor's disgruntled employee sends your company the list with the bids for the contract. You can see that your bid is high. You choose to call the contracting company to tell them you have an unfair advantage, and that your bid will remain. As a result you still lose the contract, and have to terminate some of your employees because the contract was critical to the company's survival.

Would you have done the same thing?
Which "goods" are in conflict?

Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What would you have done differently?
How would you implement your decision?

Too Much Change I

You are working a charity casino. At midnight you begin to cash out. Patrons are frantically playing up to the last minute. It is 11:50 and there is a line-up in front of your cage. You have never done cash at a casino before. You find the chips are in odd denominations and the process for exchanging chips for cash confusing. You are tired. A gentleman who has been playing all night and losing heavily comes to you with a small pile of chips to cash in. You put the money on the counter. He takes it and walks away. Once he is gone you recount the chips, twice, and realize that you have made a mistake and given him $200.00 extra.

What do you do?
Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What would you have done if you had been the player?

Too Much Change II

You are at the check-out in the local supermarket and the cash registers are not functioning. The cashier is struggling to count out your change. She gives you a handful of change. You notice that there is a dollar more than you are owed. You ask her to recount the change. She realizes her miscalculation and thanks you for being honest.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
If the cashier had been rude, or given poor service in some other way, would you still give back the dollar?
If you knew that the cashier would lose her job if she was out by a dollar, would you give the money back?
If you were struggling to make ends meet and the dollar meant a litre of milk for your child, would you give the money back?
Does the amount of money make a difference? Do you still mention the difference if it is several dollars or if it is several cents?

Lost Wallet

You have been on vacation for three days. It is early morning on the fourth day. You are planning your itinerary and need an address that is in your wallet. You cannot find the wallet. It contains $600.00 US cash, traveller's cheques, your birth certificate, driver's license, credit cards and family photos. The last place you remember using the wallet was at a supermarket. You go through your coat pockets and find the receipt which has the address of the store and the cashier's number. You phone the store to ask if the wallet had been returned. The gentleman on the phone checks the vault and finds the wallet there.

You go to the store to retrieve the wallet. The money, credit cards, traveller's cheques and other documents are untouched. You ask to see the cashier to thank her and give her a reward to show your appreciation. The manager says that the cashier has the morning off and that he cannot accept any reward on her behalf, as it may not have been the cashier that returned the wallet.

Which "goods" are in conflict?
Which values and/or ethics are affected?
What additional information would you need to make a decision?
What would you have done if you had been the cashier and found the wallet?
What would you have done if you were a customer and found the wallet?
What would you have done if you were a customer who was unemployed, whose family was in need of groceries and winter boots, and you found the wallet?